



# FREEDOM

*GILBERT CANNAN*



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# FREEDOM

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GILBERT CANNAN

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## GENERAL PREFACE

**T**HE events of the present time have started much serious enquiry into the validity of our accepted institutions and our traditional habits of thought. Our conceptions of the State, of the Church, of the organisation of Industry, of the status of Woman in the commonwealth, and of many other things have been directly challenged; and it is commonly acknowledged that a frank and thorough-going examination of our current postulates, political, religious, economic and social, is urgently called for. This series is intended to be a tentative contribution to the discussion of the problems thus raised.

The writers of these volumes do not profess to have a complete philosophy of reconstruction; nor have they endeavoured to co-ordinate their thoughts into a coherent polity. They treat of matters upon which they are not all agreed; but they agree that Society should be organised with a view to the free development of all the finer interests and activities of men, and that such organisation must take account of local and spiritual differences. Apart from this general agreement, they have worked out their several theses independently and are severally alone responsible for the opinions expressed in the volumes published under their names.

The volumes in the series will cover the main subjects relative to the function of the State. Those already planned will treat of the State in its relation to other states, to religion, to industry, to society, to woman, to the individual, to art, education and crime.

C. DELISLE BURNS  
RICHARD ROBERTS



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## CHAPTER I: THE NEED OF FREEDOM

**T**HERE can be no doubt that the conditions of war simplify the task of government. The people, alarmed lest their liberties should be destroyed by "the enemy," can readily be induced to hand them over to their Government for safe-keeping, and there must be a strong temptation for the ruling classes to keep them even after the perils of war have passed away. War is the removal of the mask of civilisation, and the facts of human life are laid bare for those who can endure to see them. Among those facts is the continual, almost unconscious, conspiracy against freedom by those who desire a short-cut solution of the problems of society.

As the grand problem of society is the establishment of freedom for the greatest possible number, this secret and stealthy conspiracy must be regarded as the chief danger to humanity. So constant and immense is this danger that war may be regarded as an element in it, and for the purposes of this argument it will be so regarded. The outbreak of war brings this danger to the surface and throws into a clear light the glorious possibility of an escape from it. It becomes apparent that the solution is to be sought in establishing a right relationship between society and the individual. From such relationship will spring conceptions upon which a real commonwealth, a true democracy, can grow. In the world, as it is at present, society is based upon a rough and ready and

fundamentally cynical compromise between the anarchy of the individual and the anarchy of the State, while in times of danger the anarchy of the State is given licence to override the anarchy of the individual.

The spirit of anarchy is the spirit of egoism, and it is only in the effort for freedom that this spirit can be transcended. In war it is triumphant, and freedom is driven underground.

Among those broad and puzzle-headed generalisations which during the great war have passed as good enough reasons for sending millions of men out to fight and to suffer in various parts of the world not the least astonishing has been this: Having enjoyed the advantages of civilisation, men must suffer its disadvantages.

In the moral vacuum created by the war such a proposition sounds reasonable enough, for in that vacuum thought can hardly live. But the proposition is destroyed by the fact that the vast majority of those who are gone have never enjoyed the advantages of civilisation. They have laboured under its disadvantages, which are hardly less horrible than the trials of wars. In peace and in war they have suffered grossly that the State may live—in anarchy.

They have done so much for the State. What has the State done for them? Nothing that they cannot be compelled to pay for; and, after they have made the supreme sacrifice for the State, those who mourn for them are to be deprived of their

liberty in order to make the State more powerful yet to guarantee the security of the individuals who compose it. Immense armaments were not enough to guarantee the security of the various States before the war. It is now alleged that they were not huge enough. Had they been larger there would have been no war—so it is said, though there is no reason to imagine the possibility of any stronger control of such armaments than of the armaments that existed.

Armaments are the means of defence; they are not defence itself. They are usually regarded as defence, with the result that preparations for war on the grand scale produce war on the grand scale. The nations bound captive to the means of defence are not free to defend themselves, and the men and women who live in them are not free to live with any fulness, for the cream of their effort is taken to maintain the captivity of the State in which they dwell.

The existence of any State depends upon the readiness of the individuals composing it to lay down their lives for it. But it is not the actual sacrifice that secures the State: it is the readiness of the individual to run the risk. That is already sacrifice enough, but the virtue goes out of it if the element of readiness and willingness is destroyed, as it must be if the sinister conspiracy against freedom is allowed to survive the war-period.

The existence of any State depends upon the readiness of the individuals composing it to lay



down their lives for it. To apply this axiom only to the uses of war is to turn it into a dangerous half-truth. It is only valid if it holds good in peace as well as in war. Men have peacefully laid down their lives for the Church and for Art and for many a good cause, and if the State cannot win such sacrifice in peace it is not morally entitled to it in war. Necessity will urge such sacrifice, but necessity knows no law and brushes aside moral sanctions. Necessity should not be fatal to freedom, for it is precisely in a crisis that men need the supple exercise of all their faculties; but the State, insisting that human life shall be as rigid as its own ceremony and regulations, denies this, and is deprived of half its power and the effective service of its members just when they are most needed.

The government of men by force and without their free consent is anarchic and must breed anarchy and destruction. Only that government is valid to which men freely consent, and their consent must be won man by man and not by the arts of the platform and the debating society. The majority has no right to coerce the minority, for a nation is not a mere meeting with a "sense" which, after being put to the vote, can be embodied in a resolution. There is often a residuum of sense in the minority, which, though overruled, is of paramount importance to the future.

It is through this residuum that the problem of the relation of the individual to the State arises. This problem, as we have seen, cannot be disposed



of by the passing of a resolution or an Act of Parliament, and it cannot be dismissed, as it has been in England in the case of the Military Service Acts, by the majority's overriding the provisions very wisely made to safeguard the minority. For the individual stands firm and is prepared cheerfully to lay down his life for what his conscience tells him to be the ultimate good of the State. He has a perfect readiness to make all sacrifices for the State, and is therefore a good citizen.

The minority and the majority attach different meanings to the same words. The one takes the State to mean the community; the other seems to imagine, as certain Germans have done, that the State is an emanation from the community, detached from it, and owing no direct responsibility to it except to demand from it work, taxes, soldiers, officials, armaments, munitions, and ships of war. In the conception of the majority the State lives in a different world, where States are engaged in a competition to the death, and such co-operation as is necessitated in the day-to-day world between individuals is impossible. And the life of man upon the fertile and generous earth is regarded as subservient to this world of States, which usurps the place of the sun. This usurpation is the cause of our modern universal slavery or what is commonly denounced as slavery, and an examination of its nature is necessary if a means is to be found to satisfy the undying need for freedom in the human heart.

The destruction of this usurping world of States would not of itself mean universal freedom, which can only be won in creation, never by destruction. A creatively constructed society would deal destruction in its progress, and every day would be one of victory and deliverance. Creation does of itself bring liberation.

As a rule, in great affairs the minority is composed of persons who are more than usually sensitive to the future and liberated from what is dead in the past. They are more acutely conscious of the present than the average and more responsible, and they are prepared to sacrifice, if need be, the immediate to the greater responsibility which they see looming ahead of them. They are concerned more than the majority, as a rule, with the implications of their decision.

Responsibility to what? The majority, especially in a crisis, are content with responsibility to the State, but the minority, especially in a crisis, will insist upon responsibility to a higher power than the State. During the Boer War Mr. Lloyd George was with the minority, insisting upon the higher power; during the European war he can see no power higher than that of the State. It may be said in his defence that a Minister of State is bound by the majority: not, however, if he be a statesman, and certainly not to the extent of coercing the minority. A Minister of State who will coerce the minority can only do so in order to win the favour of the majority, and in such action

he demonstrates his unfitness for his position by setting his individuality first before the effective prosecution of his duty. If there were but a minority of one, and that one, as he probably would be, mad, coercion would be an offence in a State which existed, among other reasons, for the defence of liberty.

It is arguable, and many do so argue, that States do not exist for the preservation of individual liberty, but of their own and for such high mysterious purposes as to be beyond the grasp of the individual mind. There are many who regard the movements of States as being as far beyond human understanding as the movements of the planets. If their movements bring death, destruction, conscription, and tyranny, it is not for the mere human mind to resist, but only to bow in awful worship. For such men there seems to be a divine sanction in war, and they will question nothing that comes out of it, though they will question freely and angrily much that comes out of the equally mysterious movements of States in time of peace. Such men regard the service of the anarchy of the State in time of war as the just price of the exercise of individual anarchy in time of peace. War gives them an immense excitement which they mistake for a religious impulse, but the excitement does not survive the passing of danger, and it is surely legitimate to question the political, social, and moral value of their "religion."

Religion is the recognition of a power beyond humanity. As it is beyond humanity, that power cannot be defined, though it can be perceived and brought into relation with human affairs. Between every man and this power there is an invisible filament by which he can draw that strange sustenance which can raise him above the bare processes of existence, and give him a conscious mastery of himself. It is within every man's power to insulate and so to destroy himself, and it is possible for every man to sever the filament and so to sink into a slavery wherein he is lower than the beasts of the field.

Under the hypnotic stress of fear in war-time many persons who have had only the dullest or no perception of this extra-human power in ordinary life acclaim it in the power of the State and will make the greatest sacrifices to give the State more and more power. Unfortunately the State, or those who control it, do not know what to do with this power, and governors are forced by it into surrender of such honesty and principles as they possess, much as priests are squeezed into hypocrisy by the blindly devout acceptance of a dogma by their flock. The people of a nation who accept that the State can guarantee their safety forget that they themselves are the power behind the State. They fall prostrate before their own power, mistaking it for the Divine power of which all men are instinctively aware, though they deny their instincts at every turn. This prostration is the more tragic as,

if they could but realise their power for what it is, they could the more easily come in contact through it with the Divine power that sustains the universe. But the suppression of freedom makes the possibility of that realisation more remote. It is only through that realisation that the word "community" can win any real practical meaning and many social calamities would be averted. Schemes devised for the "good" of an inert and unmoved humanity must fail. Men must work out their own salvation, and if they will not seek it elsewhere will find it among the damned.

With freedom among men the world of States in which moral laws are suspended would disappear, and it would become plain that only God is beyond good and evil. Throughout the whole sphere of human activities the moral law operates, and, war or no war, cannot be suspended as it seems to be when the people of a nation are prostrate before their own power, and when an individual is prostrate before his own reflection in the mirror of his vanity and claims therefore to be beyond the range of good and evil. In both State and individual the process and the result are the same—complete egoism and complete anarchy.

The problem therefore is not whether the State or the individual shall be egoistic and anarchic. Neither has the right to be anything of the kind, and where the State is anarchic the individual will find it the easier to be the same, in spite, or because, of the complicated laws created by the State to



keep the individual in order. Where the State is anarchic it does not care what the individual successfully does in time of peace, so long as he will make a show of readiness to "sacrifice" in war-time. It is out of such an immoral and licentious relationship that wars grow. If the State is dishonest with the individual it will be paid in kind, and a State which depends for its existence upon the self-worship of the people cannot possibly be honest. If it were, the fictions upon which it is based would quickly be exploded. To avoid such explosions princes and potentates and ministers send their people out to war "to preserve the State." There is an unusual degree of truth in this pretext.

Without war the people might discover their own power, and those who prosper from their vain delusions were undone. Without war, and provisions for war, government as it is at present understood would be impossible.

The majority, who will always believe in government as it is understood in their time, will support war; but the minority, who know that government is always inadequate to the social needs of the time, will oppose war as a wicked deterrent to any improvement. And the minority, being far-sighted and comparatively disinterested, will stand out for their principles, their objections to war, and their belief in future possibilities.

Are the majority who have brought the country into danger to be allowed to coerce the minority

into participating in everything that may be agreed upon as measures to avert the danger? Is the State in such circumstances to be given absolute power over the individual who may believe, as many do, that war is both immoral and an unnecessary device of government?

It is no answer to these questions to say that in war all must help. That is equally true in peace, the dangers of which are not less terrible than those of war because they are less obvious. The principle is admitted, but it is for the individual to decide *how* he shall help. Forced into an uncongenial occupation, he will be more of a hindrance than a help. . . . But, indeed, it is probable that if this principle were admitted and applied in time of peace, war would not arise, and, if it did arise, would be regarded in its proper light as a calamity, like famine or plague, to be suppressed as soon as possible. Certainly it would never be regarded as a competition, a fight to the death, and it would never be held that it was the first duty of a citizen to fight for his country. Rather it would be considered the duty of a citizen in time of war, as in time of peace, to do that for which he is best fitted. There would then be more control over war and the forces that make for war, as there would be more people with a direct and tangible interest in the maintenance of peace—that is, more people with freedom and the desire for more of it.

With an undue proportion of a nation's energy devoted to provision for war, peace must mean a

state of uneasy boredom, a respite from which will be welcomed by the unhappy multitudes who have to bear this burden. They will acclaim a state of war as a relief from the intolerable hypocrisy of a state of peace which does not make room for the full employment of their energies or the complete enjoyment of their fruits. Only freedom can make room for these desired things, and there can only be freedom in the world when men have learned to make room for each other on the earth.

The energies of the people, which properly directed should bring about this desired consummation, are sucked up in the creation of the world of sovereign States, from which they receive no nourishing return. This world of States is like a great bubble blown out of the energies of humanity, and, being a bubble, it was bound to burst, leaving the nations without control or aim, so that they find in death that meeting which their folly forbade in life. By way of achieving some measure of control it is insisted by the majority that the individual shall be absolutely subservient to the State, in whose name the life of a man shall be shaped and directed from the womb to the grave. To what end and towards what ideal? None is discernible. The only declared object is the economic and military power of the State. The liberty of the State is to be based on the overt slavery of the individual.

State anarchy having come to its inevitable conclusion, death, the community strives despe-



rately to protect itself against individual anarchy, and the instinct which urges this step is probably sound. It is the means taken which are wrong and dangerous.

The suppression of the liberty of the individual does not check but, rather, aggravates egoism, which can only be shed gradually in the free give and take of social life. It is the constant friction that makes a sea-worn pebble round and smooth, and it is social pressure that tames the individual and forces him to learn self-discipline. Freedom is essential for the growth of character, and if men are all drilled and shaped to a pattern or a type friction is obviated, character weakened, and life must lose in colour, zest, and force.

Army discipline is a thing rather to be excused than extolled. It is presumably necessary to make men hold together under conditions which are a horrible violation of all their instincts. It serves its dreadful purpose, is itself dreadful, and for the purposes of peace worse than useless. As a basis for social organisation it is sand, for it can only be achieved by relieving men of all moral responsibility for what they do under orders. There is then a complete severance of their public and their private lives, and from this severance both must suffer.

Every discontinuity in human life is a loophole through which evil can creep, and if a man is cramped and thwarted of his dignity in his public life he will avenge himself in his private life and

in his ordinary human relations. A man's most precious possession, and that of which men are in all circumstances most rightly jealous, is the simple dignity of a human being. This is not an egoistic feeling, but an impersonal, and it is impaired both when a man attempts to live above his capacity and when he is forced to live below it. It is so profound a feeling that it is often hidden away to keep it from the degradation of circumstances or from the tyranny of others, and thousands of men and women develop an artificial personality which is superimposed on their real natures, to their lasting captivity and misery. Violations of this feeling for dignity is the cause of untold secret suffering. Yet this feeling is almost the sole guarantee of decency in human affairs : it is the magnetised needle which swings to the points of the moral world, and only crass vanity, folly, and cowardice can allow it to be ignored and set aside in favour of the dignity of the State, before which, as it is more blatant and pompous, the instincts which protect human dignity shrink together and will not expose their treasure. Indeed, rather than risk the degradation of their treasure many men will submit to any outward humiliation inflicted in the name of the State. Thousands of simple men have preferred to make a show of obedience to the State during the great war rather than have their human dignity impaired by the reproach of cowardice, and in doing so they have impaired their own dignity, though they have realised it only too late. The greatest enemies of

men are within themselves, and nothing outside a man's own soul can destroy his dignity. The State is supported by the inward enemies of men, and, indeed, men have created the State as a defence against themselves. Yet this defence is hollow. Cunning, interested men use it against their fellows, give them a sense of security, and so have them at their mercy. This is the beginning of the vicious circle of exploitation in which humanity is caught. If a man will not exploit himself, he cannot be exploited. A free man will not take this first step into slavery, will not do the work he has to do merely for gain. But a man who is hardened to self-exploitation will exploit others, and so extend and fortify the boundaries of slavery in this free world. He will seek possession rather than enjoyment, and will be bound hand and foot by habit to the most greedy and most cunning of men. . . . So slavish men become so subservient and dull that they regard the State, the Government, and the community as interchangeable terms, and what the Government of the moment chooses to announce as being for the good of the State is dully accepted as being for the good of the community. In the absence of freedom there is no test. Confusion grows worse confounded, and puts the possibility of a real political structure out of the question, and effective organisation is wrecked. There must be organisation to procure freedom, but unless the need of freedom is acknowledged and envisaged at every step organisation will plunge men deeper and deeper into slavery.

## CHAPTER II: OF GOVERNMENT

**A** GOVERNMENT is the agent, composed of individuals, appointed by the community to maintain its interests and its State — that is, its dignity and honour; but the appointment of a Government does not relieve the individuals composing the community of their several responsibility to their common dignity and honour. Neither, conversely, does the appointed Government lose its responsibility to the several dignity and honour of the individuals composing the community. It is the business of a Government to hold the balance between the State and the individual, and it does so by the operation of law, which, if it makes no provision for liberty of action, thought, speech, movement, and conscience, becomes tyrannous, for it cramps individual, and therefore social, development, and makes orderly emendation of the law almost impossible. By destroying liberty a Government abrogates its most potent function, the provision for the continuance of order, and becomes not the servant but the enemy of the State and the community.

What now of the individual? He is as much the servant of the State as any official; he is part and parcel of the State, and he can be hostile to the Government without being hostile to the State. It is always open to the individual to protest against the action of the Government, and he is entitled to protest in the name of the State exactly as the nerve in a man's tooth will protest if his

actions impair his health. Probably he will not refuse to pay his share of the expenses of any measure of which he disapproves, for his goods can be taken from him; but he will, and should, refuse his personal participation in any action involved by the continuance of such measures.

The question of conflict between the collective and the individual conscience arises in a particularly acute form in time of war. Governments, suddenly relieved from the pressure of informed criticism and vested with immense power, are apt to assume that, because they are acting more than usually consciously for the State, they cannot possibly be wrong, and this assumption is fortified by the fact that war is a suspension of the moral law by agreement between two or more States. Killing, for instance, is in war no longer a matter of right and wrong. It is simply a matter of necessity—on the battlefield. Now, though the Governments of the various States may proclaim this necessity, they cannot force individuals to accept it. War may shriek and rage, but it is fully open to the individual, who has certainly some support in history, to think that the Governments could stop it if they had the mind for it. And the individual may believe, as the Quakers do, that taking up arms is the very worst way to defend his country and his State. In the European war, for instance, there are a number of men who, when their grandchildren ask them what they did in the great war, will reply with a good



conscience : " I kept my head and refused to make any money out of it." That is a very healthy way of saving the State, and there are times of crisis when the wisest course is for the individual to go on with his job as though nothing out of the way were happening. If enough individuals did this, the task of a Government would be made harder, and they would approach it the more carefully and efficiently. The individual would see to it that he was kept well instructed as to what was really being done. . . . When you have made a fool of yourself, it is no consolation to say that you did it for the State : you have probably injured both the State and yourself. Whereas, if you can, with a good conscience, do nothing in a crisis, you may injure yourself, but the harm you do to the community is infinitesimal.

But, it is objected, if the individual is allowed to do as he likes, the business of government becomes impossible. This objection is based on the pessimistic and cynical assumption that human beings, left to themselves, will always be in mischief; but, as a matter of fact, the vast majority of human beings are kept fairly well in order by their natural responsibilities, and they agree to Governments chiefly to avoid being crushed by them. It should, therefore, be the aim of government to give the individual more, and not less, freedom than is allowed him by Nature, and this would be fairly simple but for the undue amount of attention given by Governments to maintaining

the power of the State. If the State be, indeed, as I contend, but a name given to the dignity and honour of a people, then the State does not want power, for dignity and honour cannot be maintained by force, as was acknowledged when duelling went the way of witchcraft and alchemy. An individual is never so vulgar and absurd as when he is conscious of his dignity, and this is true of communities also. If a man has true dignity, he will give no sign of being aware of it, for it is too precious and delicate a thing to be exposed rawly to the public gaze. It is the vulgar consciousness of dignity in our modern commercial empires that makes them so unstable and so dangerous to civilisation and to humanity, and it is the offended unconscious dignity in individuals here and there that makes them refuse to accept all that is done by Imperial Governments in war and in peace as being truly in the interests of the State. It is possible, though rare, for an individual to be disinterested. It is quite impossible for Imperialist Governments, aiming at maintaining an invincible consciousness of dignity, to be so.

In practice, therefore, there must be conflict between the will of the individual and the will of the community. If the individual happens to be an official, he will, in that case, resign his office. If he be a private person there is nothing more to be said in the matter. The community, through its officials, is not entitled to invoke the State, for the individual may also, with as good a right,

invoke the State, which is an oracle without a voice. It can give no decision in this dispute. The individual can only allege his conscience. The Government can only assert the conscience of the community. Of the two the individual conscience is the more likely to be near the truth, for the conscience of the community is expressed *ad hoc* and is drugged by the excitement of the marketplace. Both consciences may be right, both wrong, or both confused between right and wrong. The Government, in the name of the community, may order the destruction of the individual, as the Athenians did that of Socrates; but the conscience of the Athenians is departed, while that of Socrates is to this day a living force in the affairs of men. The individual may be wrong, but the probability is that a conscience which has sufficient force to resist the enormous pressure of the collective conscience is right. Socrates was right, Jesus Christ was right, George Fox was right, John Bunyan was right, John Milton was right; but the trouble is that humanity has never sufficiently believed them to be right to perceive the value of the individual conscience, most of all in times of calamity and of the moral epidemics which arise out of catastrophe. Sinful man does not object to doing wrong so long as he can pretend that he is doing right, and he cannot stand the perhaps equally sinful man who will do an equal wrong but cannot bring himself to call it right. It is chiefly a matter of words, and the hypocritical sinner will lash himself into a fury



by pretending that the honest sinner wishes to stand in a saintly and priggish aloofness, while your honest sinner is driven into an opposition which, as a decent, tolerant man, he in no way desires.

It is claimed that the individual has no right to a conscience because the State absolves him of any moral offence committed in its name. But the State is not a Church claiming authority direct from God. If it does so, it is, in the modern world, where communities, whether they like it or no, are irrevocably committed to democracy, an injurious fraud. The State cannot have such a moral power. Religious tolerance has made that impossible. The State may, and in war it does, shoulder the responsibilities of the individuals who are sent out to kill and destroy, but it has no power to get rid of these responsibilities once they are shouldered. It cannot lay them before the altar of God and demand absolution, for it has no access to God. It does, in fact return them to the people to add to their misery, for the State is but a fountain which returns to the pool of the community what it takes out of it. If it takes only corruption, folly, and vanity, it can return only these things, and, if the individual is robbed of spontaneity, it is hard to see how the State can take anything else, for without spontaneity the individual is dull, foolish, vain, and must end in apathy and corruption. The point at which the damage is done is at the entry of the individual into conscious participation in the life of the community. If that be forced, as by

conscription, then half the virtue of the individual is lost, not only to himself, but also to the community, which cannot afford so to tamper with its only source of vitality and freshness.

Those who demand consideration for the individual do so, not for his sake and to indulge his egoism, but for the sake of the community, and to preserve it from a far more dangerous egoism. Egoism will out, and it is far better to have it breaking into a myriad fairly harmless bubbles than growing into one huge store of poisonous gas which will produce a ruinous upheaval. The Government of a civilised country has ample powers for dealing with the dangers of individual egoism, and has little to suffer from it.

In fact, however, it is not from Governments that the opposition to individuality comes, but from the vested interests behind Governments, which dread the power of an outstanding honest personality, and also desire to use the populace as wealth-producing slaves. Governments in modern States are forced into tyranny by vested interests, and they are in a position to say to the voters that, if they acquiesce in vested interests they deserve all they get. It is, however, one of the first duties of government to protect the community against such acquiescence, and liberty is the only safeguard. The irresponsibility of the individual can do no great harm; but his responsibility is essential if the life of the community is not to be hideously corrupt. A community composed of slaves cannot

be free, for liberty is an inward, not an outward, thing. Liberty is to the soul what air is to the body, and the State is the soul of the community, or it is nothing. State action, therefore, which suppresses liberty injures not only the individuals, but the community also, and such action is a cruel travesty of the functions of the State, and is no more justified in being applied for the purposes of defence than for any other purpose.

Defence is not a purely military matter. Between individuals force has long since been abandoned as an adequate defence, and in the administration of the law force is used less and less because it has been found that mind and will, intelligence and sympathy, can obviate the provocation of force. Conflict there is, and must be, but between individuals conflict is rarely reduced to the elementary "kill or be killed." For that a state of uncontrolled fear is necessary. Where fear is controlled conflict becomes more fruitful than destructive.

Now, even in the greatest war in the history of the world it is plain that the European millions are not really reduced to such a condition of fear. They can indulge the military in order perversely to gratify certain starved instincts, but they do not really believe that as communities they are reduced to the "kill or be killed" position. They know perfectly well that after the war there will be Great Britain, France, Germany, Russia, &c., pretty much as before, and that, as before, the status of

the minor nations will depend upon agreement between the greater. Such fear as they have is not sufficient to keep them fighting without the backing of a superstitious conception. It is not yet thought honourable to use in international relationships those powers of mind and will, intelligence and sympathy, which have proved so efficacious as between individuals. There is as yet no true international law.

From this divergence between the honour of the individual and the honour of the State arises the present apparent incompatibility of their needs and the almost farcical character of Governments all over the world. The individual is more civilised than the State, and this is perhaps one reason why the State attempts to stupefy and brutalise the individual by a narrow and prejudiced education and the callous bullying that accompanies conscription. As an illustration take the position of Viscount Grey, who is in his private capacity a fair type of a nineteenth-century gentleman, but in acting for the State he is constrained to behave like an eighteenth-century duellist. He must go warily, lest he disturb the honour of foreigners in an equally delicate position, and if he is challenged he must fight—not, however, with his sword, which is illegal, but with the lives of millions of his fellow-countrymen, which is legal.

Those who govern have to think in two separate ways of every problem—the State way and the simple human way—and they are not expected to make any attempt to reconcile the two.

The enthusiasts who regard the British Army as a shining sword forget that it consists of individuals, and, in order to keep their cherished conception, wish to deprive them of their liberties, and even when there is no excuse for a nation in arms to preserve a nation in uniform. National defence has been so simple, though costly (to future generations), that these enthusiasts wish to preserve that simplicity in national service. There is nothing to show that less simplicity and more economy would not have been more effective. Indeed, an increasing number of people believe that less military force and more intelligence, will, and sympathy would have ended the war long ago; but these people are derided by the enthusiasts who control the machinery of government, to whom the machine seems to matter more than any purpose it may be put to.

The last thing a civilised individual thinks of is self-defence, for he assumes that he is physically safe from attack as long as he behaves reasonably. Self-defence is the first thing considered by a civilised State, and it makes no attempt to behave reasonably. Those who are responsible for its conduct do their thinking with armies and navies, just as Porthos, of *The Three Musketeers*, did his thinking with his sword. Indeed, it looks very much as if the combative folly of the individual were sweated out of the community into the State, and this aspect of the matter justifies those who regard the sovereign State as neither more nor less



than a disease from which humanity is rightly suffering for its sins. These moralists may derive some satisfaction from their diagnosis, but as they also are a part of humanity it is their obvious duty to set about finding the cure.

Reason cannot be switched on and off like an electric light, but we Europeans can only achieve reason out of the passionate confusion into which the catastrophe of the war has thrown us, by asking questions. The first question that springs to the mind is as to why there should be this great gulf between the conduct proper to the individual and the conduct proper to the State. *Prima facie* self-defence seems to be a perfectly justifiable pre-occupation of Governments. Any suggestion that it is of secondary importance is everywhere received with derision. But when armies and navies have failed and have brought only ruin—what then? The ultimate defence of a community lies in its innate good sense and humanity; but these only seem accessible by Governments in the last resort. Meanwhile thought and reason are laid aside while armies and navies do their terrible work of defence. The strategists, like Falkenhayn or Lord Fisher, will assure you that the offensive is the best defensive. That may be true for the military mind, but it is no longer true for the political and the social mind. In ordinary social life decent individuals have long ago discovered that the offensive recoils upon him who takes it. They have learned the practical value of sobriety and tolerance.

So long as the political and the social mind remains subservient to the military, so long will Governments be removed from access to the good sense and humanity of their communities.

The one great paradoxical lesson of the Great War is that for the prosecution of war the least effective of all minds is the military and, certainly, one of the worst horrors of war is the supersession of ordinary civilian ideas by military conceptions. This makes effective criticism and control well-nigh impossible, for the military assume an air of mystery about their operations and forget their entire dependence upon the efficient functioning of civilian life. Civilians are only too ready in their exaggerated gratitude and in their sympathy for the sufferings of the soldiers to acquiesce in such forgetfulness, and in so doing they relinquish their ultimate defences. There is a fascinating simplicity about military conceptions which is, however, illusory, as it is based on the fact that soldiers contribute nothing to their own support. For men who have to earn their living life cannot be simple. The element of responsibility is too great. For the soldier life is entirely simple. His duty lies straight before him, and he has not to reckon with the future or with his neighbour. All is prescribed and fixed, duty straight ahead, rewards on the one hand, punishments on another.

Such conceptions, such organisation applied to the community as a whole would no doubt be charmingly successful if men had no stomachs and

no appetites, no passion and no heart for adventure and discovery. As, however, they have all these things and society cannot be reduced to the crudity of the trenches, the ideals begotten of that crudity are brought to shipwreck on the facts. No man can live for his country with the same simple fervour which is aroused in him as he goes out to die for it. Living is a matter of years: dying is most often a brief and swift affair. The organisation evolved to help men in their dying is then unlikely to prove satisfactory to aid them in their living. Men can be compelled to face death: can they be compelled to face life which is at least equally terrible?

The answer is that he cannot be so compelled, and it is doubtful whether a man who has surrendered his own will does in fact face death or whether the actual facing is not done by the organisation of which he is a part. Those who control that organisation are generally far removed from death.

These considerations call in question the principle of compulsion and the institutions of Government as we have known them.

To the community a man's life is far more important than his death, even in war-time, though this obvious truth is frequently forgotten in admiration for the heroic dead. The great death of an individual may have inspiration, but if the performance is repeated indefinitely, as it has been in the years of war, its inspiring effect ceases to



operate. The nullifying result of repetition is one of the most powerful influences for evil in human affairs. Five million soldiers are not five times as effective as one million, for the material results of an action are governed by its moral effect, and the gauging of the latter is far too delicate a matter to be left to the military mind, even if it be that of a man of genius like Napoleon, in whom instinct often sounded a warning as to when the material result would be cancelled by the moral. But our great modern communities can no longer afford to depend upon the operation of instinct in a single individual. Distrust of individual power has led to the development of democratic institutions, which are as yet only imperfectly established and have not yet produced any genuine control of those who cherish individual power. To reconcile such control with individual liberty is one of the central problems of government.

Those who desire individual power are concerned to destroy individual responsibility, and to do that they are constrained to cut at the roots of liberty. In the modern world, in all countries, the individual who will press and squeeze and swindle his way into power suffers no restraint on the part of the State, while the individual who cherishes liberty and his personal responsibility is penalised and, if possible, suppressed. That is to say, the State, being in fact the instrument of those who desire individual power, will allow licence but will not tolerate freedom. It will allow for hypocrisy

and vice in the individual, but not for virtue, independence, and honesty.

The reason for this is to be found in the proposition that the first business of the State is defence—"defence before opulence." But defence creates opulence for the few and vested interests more formidable than those begotten of peaceful trade. These vested interests take command of the State, extend the meaning of "defence" to include the violent opening of markets among the coloured races of the world, and polite threats of the use of force if the vested interests of other States take too eager a care for those markets. To supply the coloured races with trash in return for valuable raw materials vast numbers of the white races of the world are kept in virtual slavery, and for this precious privilege can be turned against each other in ghastly wars.

Such, in brief, is the noble activity to maintain which the State is invoked to suppress the individual will, conscience, and responsibility. The process diagnosed by Swift in his description of the creation of a (British) colony remains the same, but it is aggravated by the increase of population and by the substitution of the more ruthless merchant princes for the hereditary princes, who did at least know how to amuse themselves, and were therefore to a certain extent tolerant of the people and concerned for their welfare. A good prince might conceivably hold himself responsible to God, but a merchant prince is responsible only to his share-

holders, who are scattered, ignorant, and therefore merciless. The cruelty of mankind to man is organised and removed from the operation of conscience. Against the unmoved and inconsiderate proprietors of the parcels of his life, what appeal has the individual? He may appeal to Cæsar, to the State, but the State is controlled by the merchant princes, who are controlled by the needs of their shareholders, and the individual may himself in all innocence be one of them, devoting the best part of his savings to the creation of a system which is crushing the life out of him. Desiring the safety of the community, he subscribes to a system of defence which rules out of account altogether the moral element in self-protection and trusts not only ultimately but entirely to force.

This question of the defence of the State has become paramount. Upon its solution depends the solving of all other problems of government. The folly of generations has brought ruin and disaster, and not the immorality of the State but the indolence of the individual is blamed. The State is to continue in its immorality, but the individual is to be reformed—by the State, controlled by vested interests thrice as powerful as they were before the catastrophe.

It is true that war is the suspension of the moral law, and these vested interests are reluctant to see it restored as an active force in politics. Yet without it government must remain a farce and a

mockery. For the individual as a political entity the operation of the moral law is essential. Those who worship the State and see in it all might, dominion, and power, wish to see the individual as a political entity wiped out. With that accomplished, there would be a show of increased democracy, but the vote has been little more than a means of shifting responsibility from the shoulders of governors to the governed. Given the right of the majority to coerce the minority, and there may be votes for the asking, for the tyranny of the rich can then be fortified by the tyranny of the mob. After this terrible upheaval the mere hint of war will be enough to bring the mob over to the side of those who control the defences of the community, and hard indeed will be the labours of those who wish to defend the country in the only effective way, by goodwill and understanding of the needs of men.

Without freedom there can be no good government, for the will of the people cannot find expression and will be constantly thwarted by its passions, fears, and prejudices, which cannot but be detrimental to their interests both at home and abroad.

## CHAPTER III: OF CAPITAL AND LABOUR

**W**ITHIN the various States, in the absence of the moral law, which can only be kept effective by the free operation of the individual conscience, there will be a widening gulf between the vested interests of Capital and the vested interests of Labour.

It has become a fairly settled habit of mind to regard Labour as the innocent victim of Capital. But Labour is in its essence just as ferocious, as rapacious, and as ruthless as Capital. A Labour State would be as merciless with the individual as the Capitalist State, and perhaps even more obtuse as to the real interests of the community. Labour has sided with Capital in the Great War because its desires are fundamentally the same—egoistic, anarchical, and barbarous. Like Capital, Labour does not see beyond the sovereign State, because, like Capital, it is a machine created without any intrinsic purpose and controlled by ideas which its existence has rendered utterly inadequate. Capital and Labour, both desiring to command the energy of the community, must come to grips for the capture of its soul, the State, for love of which the individual soul must desire to undo both. The machine must not, cannot, master the soul of the community, and it is for this reason that those whose souls are articulate defy the mastery of the individual by these machines. It is true that to have his soul a man must lose it, but in the soul



of the community, not in the machinery of Capital or of Labour. The soul of the community must be lost in the soul of humanity, and that again in the soul of the universe, and so, in such loss, freedom shall be found. But while the soul of the community, the State, is dominated by machinery, the stream of humanity is choked and no single life can proceed largely upon its journey. It matters not whether a man be rich or poor : in such a community he cannot truly live, and it is to a certain extent true that his noblest deed is to die for the country which inhibits his power of living. He does then at least fling his soul free of its oppression and delivers his country from that amount of obscure and devitalising suffering.

While this monstrous perversion of human life goes on there must be such cataclysmic convulsions as war and revolution. While the immense powers of Capital and Labour are diverted to the vain, ambitious uses of absolute States, there must be continual waste and degradation, bringing ruin in their train. Partly in the sincere desire to avert these horrors, Capital and Labour will both struggle to control the State, but while the State is conceived as absolute the struggle to control it will be futile. Both Capital and Labour are crying, politically, for the moon. Nothing can control the State but a sufficient number of individuals who are alive enough spiritually to lose their souls in the soul of the community, which will then be quickened with purpose and made pregnant with

ideas. Such men will demand, as against everything else in the world, even physical security, free opportunity for development, so that more and more men may be capable of true citizenship and incapable of tyranny.

There is no other way out. Economic solutions do but amend the machine: they do little to repair the mind in control of it, nothing to supply purpose or vision towards which the machine should be employed. We cannot suddenly undo the harm that has been done. We cannot immediately dethrone the State from the minds of men. But we can insist upon the right of the individual to decide for himself in all circumstances the nature of his duty to the community. This does not seriously endanger the community. In the perils and panics of war the majority can always be stampeded into taking part in the most extravagant measures of self-protection. Thousands may lose their lives. All honour to them: but it should be remembered that they give in one moment what others give moment by moment over a space of years. These men also are deserving of honour, for they are constant servants not only of the State but of humanity through the State. They know that the loss of individual honour is also a loss to the community, and that honour once lost cannot be recovered by one headlong act of sacrifice. They know that discipline can only be built up from within and cannot be imposed from without. Rules, though enforced with the most severe



penalties, will always be evaded; but there is no escape from an active conscience, which is the only force that can master human passions and desires and bring them to the uses of civilisation. Discipline imposed from without drives them to the purposes of barbarism. Human passions and desires, when thwarted, do invariably take their revenge, and that which they should accomplish joyously and with foresight is done blindly and cruelly.

As both Capital and Labour aim at the mechanical domination of human passions and desires by organisation, neither can claim the allegiance of men who desire the happiness of full citizenship. It is the idea of domination that vitiates the purposes of both, the idea of procuring sufficient possessions and power to thwart the activities and desires of others.

There is a childish game called King of the Castle, in which one child will stand upon a mound and crow, "I'm the King of the Castle," until the others contrive its downfall, when at once another child takes the mound and crows. Just such a game is modern politics: nations, parties, classes, individuals are all engaged in it and are continually thwarting each other's freedom. No matter how small or insignificant an eminence, there is always the same noisy, foolish competition to occupy it. This may be due to an unalterable human instinct; but, if so, it should be the aim of politicians to turn it from such futility to real fruitful purposes

There is no freedom upon an eminence if it requires unremitting efforts to stay there. Capital enslaves the rich as much as the poor; and Labour, if it insists upon the sole sanctity of manual toil, would enslave all and would deny intellect, beauty, discovery, and adventure, without which no man can enjoy freedom or allow for it in others.

In truth, freedom is not in the gift of others. It is for each man to win it for himself, or, failing, to lose it. If he aims at tyranny over others, or becomes part of a tyrannous system, then he jeopardises his liberty. The Capitalistic system forces all to become part of a general tyranny, and there are no indications to show that modern social organisation in the hands of Labour would be less crushing. There is no tyrant so hard and insensible as your unintellectual man whose mind is possessed by intellectual formulæ, such as at present dominate the Labour world. These are as terrible and as devastating as the prejudices which control the world of Capital. Like those prejudices, these formulæ are made to do the work of thought, and the mind which entertains them has the illusion of solidity and emancipation. No idea can emerge but it will at once be pigeon-holed as "stale" or "dangerous"; no great event can happen, no large change begin to take shape, but there will be a ready prescription for it to make it seem to conform to existing circumstances. Thus both Capital and Labour have hailed the war as the grand opportunity for the application of their

remedies, and rather than surrender any of their prejudices and formulæ they have both agreed without the slightest compunction to sacrifice the individual to the State.

Capital and Labour are not so very unlike in their demands. The test of them is to be found in the view of education necessary to fit men to enter into their systems.

It may be said that compulsory education is an infringement of the liberty of the individual. But compulsion exists, whether it be officially recognised or no. Every individual is born free, and remains free at the price of learning to reconcile his freedom with that of others. If he will not or cannot so reconcile his freedom, then he will lose it, either through his own weakness or through the strength of others. Education is necessary to teach this reconciliation, which is no simple matter to be obtained by the use of such words as obedience, loyalty, and self-sacrifice. . . . Capital thinks education so simple a matter that it will spend the minimum upon this great service; while Labour's view of education, like so many of its views, is distorted by resentment and hostility into desire for an economic and technical equipment the better to beat Capital at its own game of exploitation. The aim of Labour would seem to be the exploitation of all by all, than which there could be nothing more calculated to make the world sterile and horrible to live in, slavish, and empty of all that makes life sweet.

While these aims govern the world education cannot be a vital force, but as these aims can only be removed by education the deadlock seems to be complete. The Europeans are attempting to find the way out through the war. But what of America? What of China and the East? Are they also to be rendered impotent by the dead-weight of stupidity and outworn tradition? It seems hardly credible that they also can be destroyed by the idolatry of the State within which is contained the conflict of Capital and Labour.

The soldiers of Europe have trampled Freedom under foot. Will it flower elsewhere or are we to seek the wild blossom in the ruins of the civilisation of the now warring nations—a civilisation to which all have contributed, a civilisation which all have consented to destroy when it was found that neither Capital would yield in its prejudices nor Labour in its formulæ.

In the end both must be regarded as the enemies of civilisation and as the betrayers of Europe, for they set up a false antithesis in which all sense of a common purpose was forgotten. Capital set up and abused the principle of nationality; while Labour in its antagonism denied that principle altogether in favour of a false, a sentimental, internationalism, which is as barren and destructive as the cosmopolitanism of Capital.

Internationalism means the co-operation of nations: a co-operation which exists and grows even through the years of war, but it is not re-

cognised by the States, which, living as they do, by the conflict of Capital and Labour, frustrate and thwart the coming together of those forces as they expand beyond the confines of their own countries. And all the while in every country Capital and Labour struggle to use the powers of the State to their own ends, and among these powers is that of the compulsory education of children.

Now, it does not matter very much what children are taught, but it does matter greatly who teaches them. For this reason alone it is criminal to economise on education and to procure only those people who will do the work for a beggarly pittance. This means in all probability that teachers are drawn for the most part from the weakly and from those who have not sufficient energy to break away from the machinery of education once they have accommodated themselves to its working. For this reason, at present, teachers are a cloistered class: the period of education is for most children one of captivity, from which they look forward to the freedom of the outer world, while they are, as a matter of fact, only too fatally prepared for acquiescence in its slavery. The solution is surely to be found in raising the status of the teaching profession, in removing the stigma of charity which still is a blot upon elementary education, and in offering such remuneration that teachers can enjoy a proper social standing and are no longer so poor that they can enjoy no educated society or must



sink to that of the un-ideäd. State education everywhere has been a deadly thing, a blight descending upon the minds of children sent forth maimed into a world where life is increasingly difficult. The industrial system has been destructive of family life, of parental authority, of the traditions of old religions, and education has done nothing to supply the needs left by them as they have perished. Instead of these direct emanations and emblems of authority, there has been supplied the idea of the State which is effective only for war and in time of war. The State is too remote from the mind of a child—or, indeed, of the adult—to gain ascendancy over it, except in some common need or distress, and in the life of the mind nothing but harm can ensue from the limitation of education to the purposes of the State. What? Is a child to be taught that the miraculous processes of this earth are wrought for Great Britain, or for Germany, or for the United States of America? Does the day come and go that the Union Jack or the Stars and Stripes may flutter in the breeze? The day comes and goes, the stars shine, the rain falls, and the dews descend that the mind of a child may be free and open to beauty and the sweetness of the earth. The mind of the child is a greater thing than the State, for in it lies the germ of the future and the only source of the security of humanity. Defile it, shame it, cramp it, and calamity must come; but give it the delicate and sweet nurture that it requires, and it will bring

forth joy and abundance. The mind of the child is the grain of mustard-seed which can put forth such strength as to move mountains.

If education be despised and neglected, then the energies of humanity cannot but be diverted to satisfy old men's greed and vanity, and they will totter to the grave, crying "King of the Castle," though all around their foolish eminence there be such a press and crush as to destroy all decency, humanity, forbearance, and good-fellowship.

This subject is the more terribly urgent at a time when a growing generation will be brought up and trained by its grandfathers. These children will have none to understand them, none to help them to win their footing in the world. The obligation of humanity is to them. It is for them that liberty must be preserved in the world, for them that the enemies of liberty must be destroyed, for them that wars and the occasions of wars must be removed. And the image of peace should be a little child, from whom everything is to be hoped, everything to be learned.

The most common image of Peace is a pair of lovers by a stile, gazing over a rich field of corn to a glowing sunset. It is an antiquated image, for peace is now no more a matter of the ploughshare than war is a matter of the sword. Both war and peace are a matter of machines—creative of wealth, destructive of life. Capital and Labour strive for wealth and provide no safeguard for life at all, for both ignore education. The time has come to end



such recklessness, to take all risks to bring the futile strife of men to a close.

We cannot turn back from machines to the fields. We cannot stay the process of the elimination of the manual worker; but we can surely check the domination of the worker by the machine, which is the cause and not the effect of the tyranny of Capitalism. There is no control of the machine. Capitalists profit by it, but they make no attempt to master it and are themselves mastered. Only mind can master the machine, and the present system, from first to last of human life, destroys mind or suffers it only to operate with a cramped gesture, with the result that institutions become more and more mechanical and less and less worthy of respect. With the element of respect removed, human beings become listless and indolent. They breed apathy and sloth, which are the parents of tyranny as they are the offspring of fear and poverty.

There is small danger in the modern industrial State of the tyranny of the individual. The power of the Czar of Russia, the Emperors of Japan and Germany, is curtailed by the industrial system. These potentates are in the hands of the capitalists, who, though they have that mighty weapon, the Press, are forced to realise that it is a two-edged weapon. But to maintain the tyranny of Capital against the threatened tyranny of Labour the two edged weapon of the Press is used most recklessly to the lasting hurt of the ordinary plain, pathetically simple, human being.

## CHAPTER IV: OF THE MAN IN THE STREET

**A**S potentates and priests, with all the myths attached to them, fade away from the human scene there emerges another figure, in whose name Government and the abuses thereof are maintained. This figure is the Man in the Street, the new idol before whom even the mighty of the earth bow down, and to this new idol, as to the old, freedom is sacrificed.

You may make all men don uniform, but you cannot thereby secure uniformity. The infinite variety of humanity remains and will not be denied. The powerful impulses that move men cannot be drilled into singleness of aim, and one way or another they will out.

What makes the discussion of these matters especially tragic is the fact that millions of men have lately for the first time discovered that which men live by—namely, the simple human quality in each other. This it is, and not military discipline, that has made the courage and endurance of the trenches possible. Discipline has made men of different races destroy each other, but it has not been able to rob them of their great discovery—that they live not for the State or Great Empires, or for their own or other's profit or for high ideals, but for each other, for the worshipful human quality and dignity that endures while there is breath in the human body and is seen even in the still majesty of death. State, Empire, riches, high ideals are used as lies for the chloroforming of

those at home, lest they, too, should discover this simple truth and cry out upon all the iniquities that deny it. This truth is the consciousness of brotherhood, and it is the imperturbable and invincible enemy of the abuses of the State and of Government. Should it reach from the men in one State to those in another then the sovereignty of the State is at an end, and the evils done in its name can be done no more or must find another covering. The very instrument, military discipline, designed to suppress this consciousness in men has rendered them only the more keenly alive to it, and they know that "the enemy" is only "the enemy" as long as he has a rifle in his hand. Without his rifle "the enemy" also is a comrade. Indeed, is he not also a comrade even in the fury of destruction which, for want of ability to face facts, we still call a "battle"?

These things are still hidden from those who are not called upon to take part in this awful experience and have not imagination enough to taste its horrors in spirit, and, to prevent their discovering them, those responsible for the sovereignty of the State strive to extend military discipline from the Army to the civilian population, and, indeed, have already done so in Germany. The military spirit creeps into every home in the land, badges, tickets, and numbers every male, and makes him a "servant of the State" without reference to his capacity or his will, his domestic needs or responsibilities. Hardship is nothing when men are dying

like flies, and unfortunately a man's real usefulness is nothing either. He must be outwardly a "servant of the State," even if he renders it in fact no service. Uniformity takes the place of justice, and already these things are done not for the State but to placate the Man in the Street, whose shadow is already athwart its sovereignty.

After the South African War the populations of the great towns of England burst out into the streets, and the Man in the Street came into being to dominate the life of the country. Publicists of all kinds have fawned upon this colossus and have become his priests. Not the King of England but the Man in the Street is the symbol of the sovereignty of Great Britain, and it is in his name that abominations are committed, in his name that "discipline" is imposed upon all and sundry for its own sake and to procure uniformity, which in the traffic of the streets is a virtue, but in nobler places an abomination.

The Man in the Street is very well—in the street; but when the powers of the State are used to force his street manners and street thoughts into the privacy of the home, of the mind, of the soul, then the conscience of the individual is revolted and his instinct for life is horridly alarmed. It is contrary to humanity that we should live in public or that the public life which all must share should crush the private life which all must live. Yet this is what is actually happening. It may be necessary, it may be inevitable, to force upon all in the com-

munity a sense of public responsibility. It is very sure that nothing can stop this process, which has been accelerated but not caused by the war, but it must be controlled, checked, and directed, and it must not be allowed to swamp liberty, otherwise the whole community in every State will be bound and sacrificed to the Man in the Street—that is, to public life at its lowest. In that event the State and the individual, as spiritual entities, the public and the private soul, will alike be submerged. The Man in the Street may then be lord of the world—but of what a world! Emperors and War Lords may be dethroned, but in their stead will reign a tyrant infinitely more powerful, utterly irresponsible, the indolent, callous enemy of art, beauty, authority, and dignity. Already in Europe humanity has found the life of the streets intolerable and has taken to the trenches; but after this darkness the streets will be made more garish, and the world will resound with their empty clamour. That life will remain dominant in the affairs of men, and it can only be made a good life if individuals are rendered strong enough in soul and in mind to bear it. The struggle to survive in it is discipline enough, for it is only by a great and continual effort that the individual can contribute his freedom to the freedom of all. He can only contribute his freedom by enjoying it to the extent of his capacity; certainly not by sacrificing it. The life of the streets is as dangerous to the soul as the battlefield is to the body. To meet physical



dangers it may be necessary for a man to renounce his mind and his will, but to encounter spiritual dangers these are the only available weapons; a uniform is no defence at all.

Every man must be a cell, an organism, in the Man in the Street; but also every man must find his own satisfaction in life according to his nature, race, and traditions. Even if the Man in the Street were to dominate the whole world, which he will do sooner or later, he would be dependent for his health upon the health of his cells and organisms—that is, the men, women, and children living their appointed time upon the earth, the individual souls of which he is compounded. If they are maimed and sick, so will he be. If they are true and sound, then he will be true and sound. As things are, and as they will be, he is a helpless creature whose limbs and organs quarrel among themselves and destroy his peace. Alarmed at his condition (and by his huge strength), those who were once his masters—kings, priests, politicians, lawyers, journalists—have become his cringing slaves, and, being slaves, they cannot perceive the virtue of the one thing needed—Liberty.

Liberty to them is but a word with which to drug their monster. Breathe it in his ear, and he will reel and roar and throw himself into convulsions from the dim realisation of that great lack which sets up so sharp an ache in the void within him. All the countless souls within him cry out for liberty as the one thing needed to give them

solidarity and weld them into one great peaceful soul that knows its desire and is content with the stress of living without the useless torment of disunion.

Alas! there are thieves, armed with the ancient tricks of government, whose sole concern with the Man in the Street is to pick his pockets, and they it is who fob the simple monster off with words until he is as dumb as Caliban. But he is Caliban upon an island whose enchantment is broken. Prospero is gone. Ariel is free. The spell has lost its potency; the magic book is drowned; and the monster, remembering, must become human or perish.

No short cuts are possible. We shall not, with the coming of peace, find ourselves in a new world. The stuff of humanity remains the same—with this difference, that the secret is out. Ariel is free. The imagination of the childhood of humanity plagues men no more. There is no mysterious authority behind the Governments, but there is some mysterious authority behind the people, more and more becoming clear to the consciousness of all, a potent emanation from the earth, as vast and miraculous as the rhythm of the seasons, a spirit expressing itself in the beauty of flowers, in the song of birds, in the filmy drifting of the clouds, but most clearly in the heart of man.

Caliban had a right to his island, and Prospero had none. Caliban is the better creature of the two, and prevails without magic, but by the power



of free labour. The magic book of government is destroyed, and upon this island in space, this earth, Caliban rules, but a tamed, honest, puzzled, bewildered Caliban, plagued with rheums and aches, but sure that the mystery of truth is within himself and not in magician rulers or debauched flatterers.

This is the cardinal fact of modern civilisation, and it is in the light of it that all problems must be considered. It makes all things, even life and death, new and strange. Never before has a civilisation had the energy to resist the corruption that sets in with satiety. Civilisations have before perished for want of discovery. Brutal labour has prevented the spirit of civilisation from permeating the whole body politic. In corrupt societies soldiers have sprung into being like maggots in a rotten cheese to destroy it; but now, though soldiers have sprung into being by the million, they cannot destroy the fabric of civilisation, which is preserved by the new power of discovery won through machinery. It is small wonder that men are prostrate before the machines that have saved them, and in a madness throw down their lives for sacrifice, and it is a bitter irony that they are led superficially to believe themselves dying in defence of States which have already been rendered useless by machines, for the life of the streets has already created a world-wide community, crude, vulgar, chaotic, but truly international. Most shamefully the so-called leaders of men dress up the State to

look like a machine, thinking that men will the more readily accept its power because of this disguise. This is the grimmest of many grim masquerades in the dance of death. It is an egregious and hurtful cheat, designed to separate the new international life of the streets from the ancient and lovely international life of the intellect. When the cheat is exposed, when these two international lives are wedded, then Freedom will come into being and the greatest chapter in the human story will be opened.

The cheat may succeed for a time, but the consequences will be appalling and men will wonder bitterly whether civilisation was worth the saving. They will be bound as slaves by the machinery they now idolise, just as Caliban was bound by the magic he worshipped.

## CHAPTER V: OF MACHINERY

**I**S machinery for the use or for the domination of mankind? That is the question, and the answer to it is to be found in the solution of the problem under consideration.

The State is to be a machine. So much is certain. Is it to crush the individual or to help him to organise his private and public life? If the moral law is again to operate in human affairs the answer can only be that the State is certainly not to crush the individual, and to avoid this the State must be brought within the scope of the moral law, and so must all the other machines.

The State is to be a machine. It used to be a kind of dining and debating society, but that is at an end. The factory system is to be extended to the general affairs of the community. The model for national affairs is no longer the country estate, the manor, but the factory.

Now the Nineteenth Century has given us a clear and terrible warning of the danger of allowing a factory to be a rich man's plaything. The horrors of the slums are the direct result, just as the horrors of the trenches are the direct result of allowing the State to be the plaything of the rump of aristocracy and the successful men who are base enough to curry favour with it. Autocratic control of any part of modern civilised life has become too great a burden for human shoulders. There are not, and cannot be, men adequate to such a task. Even autocratic control of a family has

become an absurdity. There must be more and more democratic control.

The attempted compromise offered by those to whom autocracy is still dear (and there are even more such men in England, France, and America than in Germany and Russia) is control by committees bound by regulations, which, in the name of discipline, the individual is forbidden to criticise. The committee is to be appointed by the State and to be vested with its authority, so that the individual shall be entangled in the meshes of administrative detail and the community will be choked with spiders' webs. Both the individual and the community are to be sacrificed to those who control the machinery of the State, who will tend more and more to be identical with those who control the machinery of production—that is, the factories and their adjunct services. Less than ever will a country be able to count on obtaining the full use of its best brains and finest characters, unless proper safeguards are made for the individual will and conscience to ensure that the more intelligent are not disabled by the control of the machinery of government by the less intelligent.

Machinery is an admirable thing so long as it is composed of insentient parts. It will then function as it was designed to do. But machinery which is composed of sentient human beings is unreliable and dangerous and may quite likely achieve the exact reverse of its ostensible purpose.

For instance, the Tribunal system set up in England by the Military Service Acts was fairly sound in design. It was meant to protect the civilian population against the excessive zeal of the War Office in its demand for more men. On the contrary, it inflamed that zeal, the members of the Tribunals were infected by it, yielded to it, and ceased to exercise their function, the safeguarding of the civil population. This happened because the members of the Tribunals, as individuals, could not see that they were justified in exempting any young men while other young men were suffering torment a hundred miles away. Their private feelings wrecked their sense of public duty and the individual conscience proved to be more powerful than the behests of the State. The members of the Tribunals became such fanatical conscientious objectors to the law they undertook to administer that they forgot the needs of the community and tyrannised over those other conscientious objectors who were doing their best in difficult circumstances to remember them.

Those who control the State have, then, always to reckon with individual susceptibilities, and they are best provided for by allowing absolute liberty. The machinery of the State is composed of individuals, and it will be the most reliable and most effective if they are free to adjust for themselves the balance between their mechanical and their human functions, which is too nice and delicate a matter to be done by rule. What matters is the

energy which drives the machine, and this will be the highest common factor or the lowest common multiple according as the mechanical functions of mankind are performed in freedom or in slavery. The highest common factor has the energy of radium; the lowest common multiple that of a sluggish stream.

Every human being is, to a certain extent, mechanical in his habitual actions. His habitual life can be regulated, controlled, harnessed. But his impulsive, his passionate life cannot be so treated without the most injurious suppression. Into a great deal of the work of the world passion cannot enter, and there is all the more reason why it should find liberation and utterance in other channels. Otherwise the individual will be warped and rendered less effective even for his habitual and mechanical activities, which should be regimented only with reference to making possible more and more passionate life. Work can be controlled; life cannot be, except in so far as it must make room for necessary work. And where, as with the artist, life and work are fused into one passion, the idea of control is simply ridiculous.

Now, all men have a certain element of the artist in them, the capacity for enjoying or flooding with joy the phenomena of life. It is uncontrollable, it is irresistible, and it is blind folly which makes the servants of the Man in the Street, the idolators of the machine, attempt to



resist it. Yet, subservient as they are to the factory system, they can do no other. With the sound of the machines thudding in their brains they can only ask that they should be driven faster—faster—faster.

By all means drive the machines faster, but do not drive the men. Let the machines whizz and whirr to the release of men and to no other purpose: to their release from poverty and fear and shyness and all their other deadly enemies. When they are so released they can be trusted to achieve more and more passionate life and creative force which will crack the crust of the stupidity of the ages.

This is a consummation most devoutly to be wished, for it will put an end to those who dread the combinations of Capital on the one hand and the unions of Labour on the other. Neither of them is a real danger. Capital collects the energy emanating from the work done in the past; Labour gathers together the energy necessary for the work of the future. The present has a dual loyalty—to the past and to the future—and it is when this dual loyalty is acted upon that Freedom will dwell securely in the present. Both Capital and Labour are necessary to the driving of the machine, but they cannot unite until they perceive, and share their perception of, the purpose of the machine. And the machine has no purpose save the creation of Freedom, which is as necessary to the rich man as to the poor. Freedom is not to

be bought. Only licence can be purchased, and that corrupts him who procures it.

A modern community must be radio-active or its energy will run counter to the deepest truth as yet perceived by the human mind. Men cannot be drilled into such activity, but they can be galvanised into it by liberty, which has never yet been used as a social principle. It can only be tried if those who control the State allow for it, and it must be allowed for if there is to be any health in us. Liberty is not anarchy. It is not the enemy of the State, or, if it is so, then air is the enemy of man, and he has no business on this planet, where his existence is made possible by the atmosphere. If it is wrong for a man to be free, then it is wrong for flowers to grow, for streams to flow, and for birds to sing.

But only the foolish and blind worship of the State could make it seem wrong for the individual to be free. Man is only free as a social being. In solitude he is the slave of hunger and of his untutored instincts. As a member of society he is relieved from this pressure and begins to feel that there is some great meaning in his life, and in the dawn of such consciousness is the beginning of liberty. Society was made for man, not man for society, and it is for a man to fulfil his duty according to his conscience, and not for society to compel him to conform to a certain rule and routine of duty.

The dullard's mind can only perceive acts and

not processes, and when the idea of compulsion by the State penetrates his clouded brain he asks for a definite act of compulsion, which, as in conscription, thwarts the natural process of compulsion by the collective will urging towards some true and noble end. Worse than this, the act of compulsion makes it easier for the collective will to be diverted to ends ignoble and injurious. And in proportion as the State moves against the individual by acts and not by social processes it becomes tyrannous and operates by power rather than by authority. In the hands of the military, who are themselves governed by a rigid system, the State is absolute power and authority disappears from it altogether.

The philosophy of the Absolute State, of the State as machine, has its attractions for the majority, because it promises for all a modicum of existence. But there will always be a minority for whom a mere existence will not be enough and will even be detestable. Mere existence for such men and women implies moral death, and that they will not endure. They are hostile to the Absolute State because they know it to be concerned only with existence, while they are eager for life.

Herein lies the fundamental conflict between the individual and the State, between man and the machine by which he gets his bread. The machinery of the State ineffectually controlled tends to reduce the standard of life, while the impulse and the fundamental needs of the individual urge him to raise it. The power of the State

wipes out moral and spiritual considerations, and the power of the individual aims constantly at their re-assertion. This conflict is unending, for the individual cannot master the State nor can the State master the individual. Contention there must be, for it is an essential condition of a healthy social life; but the community should be so organised that this contention is within the law, otherwise the law will be subject to violent emendation, and in violence both the State and the individual suffer unduly to the detriment of the community. The law is an agreement by which the needs of the community are set up as the first to be satisfied, for from this satisfaction the members of the community can find theirs. But the law cannot lay down what in every emergency the needs of the community are. There will always be divergence of opinion and, in times of stress, of conviction, and it is precisely in times of stress that it is peculiarly dangerous for the majority to over-ride the minority. The majority will be alive to the immediate needs, but the minority will look beyond them and will realise dangers of which the minority is not even aware. It is then directly contrary to the interests of the community that the minority should be suppressed, for, even if it be driven against its will into opposition to immediate measures, it remains as a sign-post pointing to the measures that will ultimately have to be taken.

It is in the minority that the individual is

especially valuable. The majority in control of the machinery of State will desire, in the name of the State, his suppression. But the machinery of the State and the State itself are two different things. The individual is a part of the State, and does not cease to be so by refusal to become a part of machinery set up for a purpose approved by the majority, and this has been admitted in law, though not in fact, by the Military Service Acts introduced into Great Britain in 1916. This negation of the law has been due to the old-fashioned military habit of thinking of the individual as a mere unit of physical energy contributing to the creation of the spiritual entity, the King's Majesty, or the Integrity of the Realm, or, as we have begun to call it, the State. Now, unless the individual is conceived as a spiritual entity, he must be the slave of the State, and a right relationship between them is impossible, for they are considered as living on different planes. Even now, astonishing though it may seem, the individual is generally regarded as a spiritual entity only if he be a member of a Church or a sect, the supposition being, apparently, that spirituality came into the world with the Bible—an illuminating instance of the ancient and superstitious ideas which are still allowed to govern the terrible and dangerous machinery of modern social organisation.

If, however, the individual is regarded as a spiritual entity, then an honourable relationship becomes possible: neither the State nor the



individual is paramount, but the honour of both is bound up in their relationship, and in this a great proportion of their hostility will disappear. It would then become the business of the State to foster this relationship through education, whereas, under the theory of the Absolute State, education tends to destroy that relationship by inculcating the idea of the State as a mysterious and incalculable power which can and will demand and enforce service, with consideration in time of peace, ruthlessly in time of war. So peace is made to appear as a smiling time of ease, war as a noble and soul-testing storm; whereas it would be nearer the truth to say that souls debauched by the State in time of peace are destroyed in times of war. In both peace and war the grinding of machinery creates a moral vacuum, to fill which the life is sucked out of institutions, traditions, homes, dreams, hopes, and visions. Only the release of the spirit of liberty can restore the health of humanity.

Human nature cannot stand still. If it cannot move forward to civilisation, it will plunge backward to barbarism. The theory of the Absolute State, which is really mediæval in its superstition, has acted as a check on the upward movement of humanity. The vested interests which feed upon it have made the State an impassable barrier, and therefore humanity has plunged backward. Yet, as always, a few courageous individuals have surmounted the obstacle, have gone ahead, and cannot



be brought back into the downward flood. There will always be individuals so civilised that they cannot in any circumstances be dragged back to barbarism. They may have found expression in art, or in political and social activity, and when they have achieved this simplicity of living the State, or, rather, the majority which controls the machinery of the State, is powerless. What can it do? It has only machinery against mind fortified with spiritual conviction. It can destroy the artist, but not his art. It can persecute a religious man, but it will only extend the sphere of his influence; and for every zealous social worker it removes two will spring into being. The solidarity by machinery which the State seeks to impose is a sham compared with the natural solidarity of free men. This is the real, profound human need. The State which starves it and suppresses liberty will be destroyed, not by enemies from without but by dangers and follies from within. Indeed, it may truthfully be said that the State must be self-destroyed before it can be vanquished from without. The State in which there is no honourable recognition of the individual as a spiritual entity stops the flow of its vitality at its source, and there can be no great hope for it as the servant of humanity, for it is as such and only so that the State is worthy to be regarded. Its claim to be absolute is an intolerable assumption. The recognition of the State, of the group consciousness, is a great civilising principle, but in Europe

that principle is degraded by commercial interests, and the only group consciousness which is suffered to exist by the devotees of the Absolute State is that heated and inflamed prejudice which so dishonours the noble word—Patriotism.

## CHAPTER VI: OF LOVE OF COUNTRY

**T**HE base conception of the Absolute State is doomed. It is being ground between the upper and the nether millstone, between the human intellect, which has already attained Freedom, and the profound feeling of common humanity, which in all men knows the secret of Freedom, but will only yield it up on the awakening of the spirit. When the mind and the spirit of a man are wedded, then humanity bestows upon him the secret of Freedom as a marriage gift. It is an enchantment which no power on earth can break and the rare free men attain immortality with their fellows, while the memories of slaves perish like spring flowers beneath a frost.

The spirit of free men lives ever in their race, and about this spirit gathers the love of home, the love of country, which cannot live without it. Those who cannot win their own freedom cling to their inheritance and regard it in their blindness as the source of all their power of enjoyment. Such warmth, such love as they have is derived from this tradition. The sources of freedom within themselves they leave untapped. They become parasitical, narrow, cramped, prejudiced. They are dominated by rigid conceptions, which are supported by political and religious systems. Upon such rigid conceptions they base their morality and trim their rules of conduct to fit them.

Instinctively they still worship the spirit of free men, but consciously they colour their systems and their codes; the spirit and the form are divorced, and in consequence patriotism and love of country is remote from the actual practice of human life, and is only effectively aroused in response to and reaction from fear.

When, therefore, the spirit of free man in a race seems to be threatened, the minds of its members fly to the concrete forms they have heaped up in their honour, and they die defending them which are not worth defending. The immortal spirit of free men needs no defence. It is the contribution of each race to the slow-growing freedom of humanity. There is no property in it: nothing that can be taken away. It is falsely evoked when property, trade, and policies are threatened, as they never would be if they were in consonance with Freedom.

Love of country implies love of the State, but not necessarily acquiescence in the machinery of the State. Detestation of the abuse of an institution does not imply a desire for the destruction of the thing itself. The State is the necessary embodiment of the spirit of the free men of a country, of that by which the country lives. It is when the State becomes an engine for the purposes of the slaves of a country that all those in whom the desire for Freedom stirs are flung into revolt.

The alternative to the Absolute State is not the Absolute Individual, but the recognition of their

relationship. When that is recognised, and not till then, will it be possible to recognise the relationship between the different States and to reconcile the different loves of country which maintain them. So long as each State claims absolute dominion over the individual within its gates, so long must it claim, in theory, absolute dominion over the other States of the world, and it will regard their existence, contrary to all the facts, as inimical to its own. They will contribute not to the freedom of humanity, but to the warring world of States, which is so terrible an oppression upon the world of peaceful and industrious men and women.

Love of country, love of home, are among the strongest and most beautiful of human emotions, but they are defiled by hatred of those who have other countries, other homes. Is not this great world large enough for all these loves? It can be made so once it is realised that all these vast and powerful emotions which grip great groups of men proceed from the instinctive simple loves of men, which, according as they are satisfied or dissatisfied, will make their collective emotions good or evil, apt for enduring constructive work or for the filthy business of blind destruction which we still call war and endeavour vainly to disguise and cover up with the sentiments and phrases of a bygone day. By such hypocrisy patriotism is tarnished, and its lustre can only be restored by the solution of this problem of the Individual and the State and by the

Acclamation of Liberty as the only solvent of the sorrows and perplexities of the human race.

That is a strange love of country which sets about to destroy its liberty at the first signs of danger, yet, in the name of patriotism, in the European countries the system of conscription has been steadily enlarged until, as it inevitably must, it has passed from the purposes of defence to the purposes of opulence. And in the United States of America there are signs of a system growing into being by which men are being virtually conscripted for the purposes of opulence without reference to the purposes of defence. The interlocking of the Trusts more and more tends to curtail the liberty of the individual, who, once he takes his place in the industrial machine, must go and do according as it grinds him. It needs but the threat of war against America for the love of country to be invoked to bring about the completion of the system of military and industrial conscription. In Germany, where things are done frankly which in other countries are done surreptitiously, complete conscription is already in being, and it has been created in the name of patriotism. So it will be in all likelihood in America. To achieve this complete abuse and reversal of the meaning of patriotism, this base disloyalty to the spirit of the free men of every race, it does not matter whether a beginning is made with opulence or with defence. Once either opulence or defence is set above liberty, then the



collapse into a system of slavery cannot be averted. And this is happening in every civilised country in the world, as in all of them, one by one, the machinery of industrialism replaces the machinery of agrarianism and so cuts the ground away from the institutions built up on it. Nothing can stay this process: nothing can prop up decrepit institutions, and it is futile to appeal to antiquated ideals of freedom.

Against aristocratic tyranny it was the habit to assert the rights of man as an individual. Against industrial and democratic tyranny it is necessary to asseverate the rights of man as a social being and to recognise that it is only as a social being that man is an individual. Apart from society, man is a childish egoist. It is only in and through society that he can develop into a full-grown civilised creature, capable of a real patriotism, a full and true love of his country and his kind.

Of what kind of patriotism are men capable in the industrial system? Do they love that system? It is world-wide: the same in all countries, only varying in the degree to which overtly or covertly it makes use of conscription. Do they love their factories—their dull little homes? Or do they love the political institutions which in most countries the industrial system has rendered absurdly inadequate? Or do they love the churches which so few of them ever enter?

In all countries men love their wives, their children, and nearly all men have at the back of

their minds some dear scene—a rugged hill-top against the sky, the bend of a river threading through the willows, a gay and busy street, or even a grim, dull thoroughfare making a drab background for gay, fantastic thoughts. These are the objects of men's loves, and, left to themselves, they would know that they could never be endangered. But upon these basic loves are forced an arrogant and stupid pride in the superstructure of their collective existence, the collapse of which would do no one any great harm and conceivably much good to many. Yet when the superstructure is threatened they are easily persuaded that their basic loves are endangered, and they are then made to surrender them, to leave their wives and children, to risk, perhaps, never again setting eyes on the beloved scene.

The patriotism which sacrifices the profound loves of men is a sham. It is known to be a fraud by those who profit by it, yet so helpless are they beneath the grinding force of the industrial system that they, too, have to assume this perverted love of country and to risk the loss of their sons, though not that of their wealth. The system is too powerful to be disturbed by war. To those who have it gives in abundance, from those who have not it takes away even that which they have.

It is small wonder that in time of war the cry of liberty should be raised, for war makes plain the general condition of slavery, which is so abject that the cry of liberty lures men deeper into the morass.

Men are possessed by the grotesque idea that they can win back their liberty by destroying that of others. One nation accuses another of stealing liberty, of having base designs upon that which all have been engaged in destroying. Having failed to find liberty in life, they seek it in death, and this is the fatal and inevitable end of the abuse of patriotism and of the basic loves of men.

Man passes from the prison of the womb to the prison of the grave. His life should be free; but, abused, gulled, cheated by his fellows, he seems for ever to be attempting to thrust his way to one or other of these prisons. Appalled, it would seem, by the mysteries at either end of his being, he is for ever demanding of them some clue to his purpose, some support for his difficulties, and in both he is met with the silence of eternity. He longs for deliverance from the obsession of the womb and the obsession of the grave, and for a truth that shall reconcile the warmth of the one with the coldness of the other. Love promises him a revelation of the truth of the womb; religion lures him on to seek the truth of the grave. Meanwhile life slips away, and seems so brief that it can contain no truth. His personal loves are not enough: he must seek a love in which he can lose his personality, some great collective passion in which he can sink his doubts and tremors, his terrors of his two prisons. These terrors drag him down until he will make of life another prison that he may not suffer too violent a change in the form

of his existence and may approximate as near as possible, without actual sacrifice of existence, to what, if he sinks so low, he had much better have been—stillborn.

To this end moves the pressure of modern society, which makes of every country a prison-yard in which sullen men pace round and round at the bidding of their warders, until, at last, impatient of their tiresome duties, the warders have set one gang of prisoners against another. They had to do that or to open the prison-gates and let them free.

Why complain? Life has taken that form. Surely it is on the whole better than the mediæval.

There was more freedom then, and to acquiesce in this is to say that men are helpless, that life can do with them as it will. It is to submit to the tyranny of the womb and the tyranny of the grave. and to let their darkness put out the light of the world.

The key to the prison-gates is love—love of humanity, love of country, love of home, love of children. Let that be the basis of society, and the light of the world will shine again. It will drive back the darkness that proceeds from birth and death, and it will conquer the fear that the darkness instils into the hearts of men. It will kindle hope, courage, and energy from which to breed mind, the only power that can control the industrial machine or the herds of men who are harnessed to it. Only in love can freedom be found—in love seeking marriage with truth.

This love is the irresistible power that has driven men from one torment to another, from prison to prison, from tragedy to tragedy. For life is tragic. Let us have done with all foolish pretences that life is a game or a joke or a time of pleasure. Games, jokes, pleasures—all have their place in life, but the salt of life is its tragedy, the noble heroism with which men struggle to break free of the dual tyranny with which they are overshadowed, and by work and unending bitter effort add to the light of the sun the inward light which they have discovered in themselves.

“More light! More light!” The light of the sun reveals the outward world. The inner light of the soul reveals the inner world, to the exploration of which every energy, every passion, should be turned. And to this service we must command the energy and the passion of patriotism. Not a place in the sun is needed by the love of country, but a place in the inner world, where harmony and purpose are to be sought. Here understanding is bred, and here liberty and tolerance dwell. Here already is a great international system in which it is impossible to hate a man because he is a German or a Russian or an Englishman. Here superficial differences fall away and fundamental differences are reconciled. Material and temporal interests fall into their place and serve spiritual and eternal unity. Here is peace and here is freedom commanding all the activities of men, interlocking them all, combining all their loves, uniting them

against their hatreds and their foolish, shallow passions.

This is not mere visionary hope. It is a description of a living actuality. The central peace of the world cannot be attained by war. The freedom won and established in the past cannot be destroyed. Those who attempt to defile it destroy themselves and their dupes, who, though they be numbered in millions, are yet impotent. Still, the good deed and the true word will shine like a candle in a world of shadows.

Truly it is in such a world that we now live. The living are more ghostly than the dead. The thin howl of their patriotism wastes away into a shrill scream borne away by the wind. But in the hearts of those who desire freedom rises the full song of the love of country—no wistful dreaming of old memories, but the superb chant of present glories and the confident hope of future joys as more and more the visible scene of our pilgrimage is illuminated by the invisible light. There is a clear call to the shadows to put on flesh, to exult in their manhood, to let their eyes so shine that every one of them is a candle before the Lord. There is the command: "Put off the uniforms of patriotism, for they are shrouds. Put on the garb of honest work, that you may prove your love of country by making it a grand instrument in the service of humanity." Only in such service is a country free, and only in such service can the men in it be free men, free to love their country, free



to contribute their love in their work to its life, free to make the homes which are the cells whereof a country is composed.

With all men working in such a spirit and in such a service, there would soon be an end of the foolish superstructure of society in which in the modern world all men take so false a pride. A country would then be worthy of love. It would be inspired with it, thrilling with it. It would be animated by something worthy to be called patriotism.

## CHAPTER VII: OF THE FREEDOM OF WOMEN

**T**HE failure of men to establish in human society sufficient liberty to withstand a general crisis brings sharply to the view the problem of the freedom of women, the consideration of which soon makes it clear that here we are probing very near to the heart of the problem.

In regarding the individual as a spiritual entity in the preceding chapters no sex-difference has been considered, nor is any such consideration possible. If the individual is in fact to be a recognised political entity, then women also must be considered as individuals.

In the aristocratically constructed society from which humanity is so painfully emerging only fortunate individuals were accorded political entity, which has always been regarded as a privilege. In a democratically constructed society it is a right, which is symbolised in the vote. Women claiming that right have demanded the vote, and those who believe in political entity as a privilege have denied it them, thereby admitting that Great Britain is not in fact democratic. Great Britain, like every other civilised country, is a plutocracy, differing from the rest only as being more subject to the caprices of public opinion.

As the most inflammatory prejudices are those relating to sex, public opinion is in this matter of the political claims of women more than usually capricious and therefore obstinate, and therefore

on the side of privilege, which claims the support of the orthodox Christian ideal of women as beings so pure as to be above the distressing squalor of the masculine hubbub of the market-place and the legislature. How this ideal is reconciled with the general subjection of women it is impossible to say, though probably ideal and practice are, as in so many other affairs, kept in separate compartments of the mind. An Englishman or an American will quite honestly assure a woman one week that she is an angel of whom he is entirely unworthy, and the next clap her into economic slavery, even, so strong is the force of tradition, when she has money of her own or can earn her own living. The prejudice against the independence of women is dying, but it will linger for many years yet most jealously to watch the morality they evolve to suit their new condition.

Independence is not freedom. It is only the opportunity for it which should be granted to every man and woman. In a properly ordered world it would be their birthright; but we live in a world where all men in all countries are economically enslaved. If a great many can do as they like, it is because they do not like anything very much, and the greater number have little chance of liking anything but what they can get.

The pressure of this vast universal slavery weighs most heavily upon the woman, who in the ordinary family has to face the real struggle with the difficulties of living. At the same time she

has to fulfil the delicate and most precious duties of a wife and a mother. And the astonishing creatures who handle this intricate and arduous position successfully are treated as inferior beings and unfit for political entity. When they accept such treatment they become so, and many women do sink their humanity in their motherhood and wifehood. The physical effort needed for childbirth often produces apathy and an unintelligent satisfaction, and the woman then consents to put up with such relationship with society as she can procure through her man.

This is bad enough for the women to whom it actually happens, but it is outrageous that it should be taken as the model for the position of women in society, for it means a despairing fling of the hands in the face of the physical fact, and that fact of all the most inspiring, the most life-giving and revealing. It is as though men, wrenching free of the tyranny of sex, thrust women down into it—again the ancient delusion of procuring freedom at someone else's expense, and this delusion has produced the twin tyrannies of marriage and prostitution, the legal and the illicit forms of economic slavery.

To assail marriage is not to deny the essential spiritual principle of marriage, which is the very hub and centre of human society; but that principle is debauched and corrupted by the subjection of women at the bidding of a supposed economic necessity. That marriage is alone honourable

which has grown out of a passionate spiritual necessity and has become a house of freedom wherein the lovers dwell to bless with their freedom all who come in contact with them. Every other union is a dishonourable folly, and it is just here that the machinery of society breaks down, for it is made to attempt that which is beyond it. It is impossible to test the quality of a marriage except by experience. If it withstand the test, it will endure; if not, it will fail and will be a lasting source of misery. To admit failure in a society without liberty and tolerance is to meet scandal, condemnation, and ruin, all of which fall most heavily upon the woman, who, economically a slave, politically at a disadvantage, must, if she is honest and breaks away, face the world crippled, probably in the end to be driven to seek the protection of another man. If it be her luck to make a more successful adventure in marriage, well and good, though the stigma of her honesty remains. If, however, she fails once more or cynically accepts prostitution—that is, sex-accommodation as an economic bargain—her position is hopeless. Society, it is said, must be protected—against the very evils which itself creates and aggravates. But a free society would not require the protection of prejudice. By making room for marriage at its highest, by allowing generously for failure, where failure is so fatally easy and so much the common experience, there would be removed that exasperation which is the most frequent cause

of immorality. Human passions are only dangerous and destructive if they are severed from the central passion for freedom. This is admirably secured by the code of modern morals, and society insists upon defending itself from those passions which it has robbed of health. The passions of men are diverted into unworthy channels, while the passions of women are cramped and poisoned by their captivity. The result is the degradation of experience into sensationalism and a huge increase of boredom and misery.

As the industrial system has weighed most heavily upon women through marriage and prostitution, it is not surprising that they should be the first to revolt against it, and it seems probable that it will be from women that the impulse towards freedom will come to sting men out of the apathy into which they have been brought, partly by the monotony of their labours, partly by the apparent prosperity and security with which they are rewarded. Women, on the other hand, have to bear in the home a monotony of toil with which that of the factory is light, while of the apparent prosperity and security they have very little. Their condition is bad enough to produce a spirit of revolt, a deep feeling of horror and outrage which in the great mass of men is palliated by the accessibility of small pleasures. These soothe their anxieties and make it the harder for them to realise their lack of freedom.

Soothing the anxieties of women is a more



expensive business, and the industrial system has so far failed to produce wealth enough for that. Yet millions of women have been numbed by the horrid difficulties of their domestic servitude and paralysed by their ignorance and by their vain efforts to win a certain modicum of freedom from men by devotion.

The natural remedy is being found in the life of the streets. Women also are beginning to seek outside the home the comfort they have failed to find in it, as both sexes must fail until they realise that a home, like other spiritual things, is begotten, not made. Hands cannot make it, neither can machines, and if these alone be relied on to maintain it then it must decay and perish.

What the home is that will the community be. Freedom, therefore, like charity, begins at home. and the first step towards the freedom of humanity is the emancipation of women. Once they have tasted freedom they can be entrusted to insist upon it in men and they will not accept slavish sluggards as lovers and husbands.

The idea of the emancipation of women is accomplished, and the fact must follow, for human life is dragged painfully in the wake of the conquest of ideas. Once an idea is gained, folly, prejudice, and privilege are powerless to avert its realisation. Women cannot work for their living? They can and do. Women cannot defend the community? Their efforts alone have made defence possible in the Great War. Still, they do not claim

the vote as a reward but as a right, symbolical of their right to share in the work of civilisation and in the disposition and distribution of the results of that work.

Are they incapable of distinguishing between a Tory and a Liberal? They are not alone in that. They can distinguish readily enough between the sincere, purposeful man and the blatant, ambitious fool, which in a time of crisis is the only distinction that matters. Their interests are the most fundamental and living interests of the community, and upon them it is essential for the good of the community that they should vote.

The political freedom of women is at hand. Will it bring with it social and moral freedom? Men will be more jealous of their sexual privileges than they have been of their political. But with the emancipation of women those privileges will have to be amended and promoted into rights. This will mean a fundamental modification of theory and practice. More liberty means less licence, which is one great reason why the privileged oppose the growth of liberty so stubbornly and why they have fought the recognition of the rights of women so fiercely step by step.

Those battles are over. The rights of women are recognised. It remains only to be seen what use women will make of their liberty and how they will prepare themselves for its enjoyment. I know of no reason why girls should not run the same risks as boys, and why they should not be as fully

and as openly educated for the part they are to play in social life. Emotional experience is even more vital to a woman than to a man. A woman who has had the emotional experience proper to her temperament is almost a creature of a kind quite other to her sisters in whom emotional experience has been baffled, and the right to achieve this miracle is the most fundamental of all the rights claimed by women. Fully recognised, it could bring into the world an immense force, a living beauty, a deep surging song, an inspiration and a stimulus to imagination and effort which in a very few generations would change the whole aspect of humanity. It would transfigure love, illuminate motherhood, and make of marriage the most holy phenomenon in the whole range of human experience. It would create an atmosphere in which superstition could hardly live, lies and myths would lose half their power, truth would shine in the ways of common trade, and the range of understanding would be immeasurably widened. For there is in woman so fortunate a quickness of knowledge, before which the intellect must bow, as it must bow before the rain and the wind and the flowers in the hedgerows. Such a woman is like a fruit-tree in blossom, and such a woman is free as nothing else in the whole miraculous earth is free. She is the clearest and most lovely intimation of divinity, and there is no beauty like unto hers. Before it vanity, sensuality, arrogance, folly, greed, and sloth must recoil, and from it the soul

of man must take fire to create himself and all that he is and has and lives in her image.

So poets have conceived woman and have endowed those whom they have loved with the full beauty of which they held the germ within their souls. This beauty lives in their souls as the child in their womb, to be created in the full and splendid freedom of love. Such a woman was Heloise, such Joan of Arc, and such, defiled though she was, must have been Helen of Troy.

Towards such freedom and such beauty women are moving, and already they are beginning to accept it as their birthright in this tragic time when men have sold theirs for a few pieces of silver. Perhaps it has always been so. Perhaps women have been able to endure their slavery so long as men were free, but when men also sink into slavery then the position of women becomes intolerable. When they have all to gain and nothing to lose then it seems that women become indomitable. Perhaps when they are forced to despair of their men, women, roused by their instincts to a care for the future, bestir themselves and force an outlet.

Whatever be the explanation, it is certain that as men have let freedom fall from their nerveless hands, women have pounced on it and now hold it aloft, bearing it as a torch which shall and must be handed on to the next generation.

It is easy for the State to deal with men by conscription; but what can it do with women? Conscript them? Hardly. It may compel their

industrial service; but what is it to do about their fundamental and natural service, the bearing of children? Compulsory motherhood? With an opposition organised by a No-Conscription Fellowship; with tribunals to deal with claims for exemption on business grounds, or on the grounds that it is in the national interest that the applicant should continue in her ordinary occupation; with an hysterical Press screaming for the shirkers to be combed out of Government departments, and the constant re-examination of the unfit and the medically rejected, the classification of all women according as they are fit for the various branches of midwifery. . . . Yet if the State may compel for the destruction of life, why may it not compel for its creation? The results of the one would be no more grotesque than that of the other.

Yet the truth lies beyond the reach of irony. Slavery leads to destruction, as freedom leads to creation. As women are physically creative, their need of freedom is absolute, passionate, and fundamental. Dread of its passion has led to its suppression in all civilisations until now. And now it will out, transforming everything in the world, supplying a test for the new civilisation as we build it, insisting that in the house of humanity there shall be light and air and room for freedom. Neither Capital nor Labour shall be lord of the world, but Man and Woman shall reign, seated side by side, joined in love and labour for the noble service of the child of peace.



## CHAPTER VIII : OF CHILDREN

**I**F machinery could produce children its domination of humanity might be justified, but as human beings retain that function they are bound to defend it and to resist the usurpation of their other functions and duties, which are all subsidiary to this. They are faced, then, with the appalling difficulty of so training children that they can take their share in tending the machinery of Society and at the same time retain their freedom.

Far above all political problems, both national and international, is the question of education, which, if it be made subservient to the exaggerated national consciousness, which is the great evil and folly of modern times, the infallible symptom of slavery, must be injurious and contrary to freedom. The difficulty in education is how to reconcile loyalty to the past with ambition and hope for the future, but it is not an insurmountable difficulty.

In patriarchal society a man's first obligation was to his father, and his children were made to feel the force of that obligation. The result was a superstitious reverence for old age and a belief that grey hairs were the beginning of wisdom. Christianity did nothing to shake this belief, although a perception of the grace that is in children is cardinal to Christianity: "Except ye be as little children ye shall in no wise enter into the Kingdom of Heaven." This is not an exhortation to obedience and docility, but an indication of



grace. Where grace is there is Freedom: and where grace is not there is slavery.

Now, it is plain to the dullest perception that there is in children a grace which in the vast majority of adults is wiped out. Loss of grace means moral death, which is the wages of sin.

Golden lads and girls all must  
Like chimney-sweepers come to dust.

Death is terrible enough but is not an enemy like moral death, which brings corruption to the will, and corrodes the desire with ashes, and makes of life a tomb. The weakness of human nature makes men and women seek moral death as a preparation for that end of life which they so deeply dread.

If that is the desire and the will of individual men and women there is nothing more to be said. No power on earth can stay them, but in the interests of society, in its bare defence, they must not be allowed to inculcate the seeds of moral death in the minds of children. Yet this is the abomination towards which education is perverted. It is almost a deliberate conspiracy on the part of decadent men and women to destroy the grace in children, which is the only source of the security of a community. When grace is gone the mind withers and the soul withdraws to its secret places: there is an end of courage and independence, of spiritual fertility, and of that laughter which is the very song of Freedom. Men and women can then laugh only from buffoonery, never from joy, and

the pure strains of children's laughter debouches into the muddy flow of empty sniggering.

Educated in moral death, men and women cannot make the effort necessary to attain inward freedom, and the dreadful weight of their failure descends upon those who come after them. There will always be such an inheritance for every generation, but it should be prepared for it and trained to deal with it. This can only be done by an education aiming at the maintenance of grace, which finds its easiest expression in the spirit of play.

Grace shines in those creatures in whom the inward knowledge of truth is uncorrupted by falsehood of thought, word and deed, and there seems to be no reason why it is so easily lost, or why the spirit of play should disappear in the adult work of the world. The obvious reason is that grace cannot be bought and sold, and is therefore squeezed out of human society; but the frenzy of buying and selling only arises in the absence of grace. No man whose work is a joy to him cares overmuch for making more than a living for himself and his dependents, but from lack of grace work for the vast majority has become joyless, and children must be stripped of their grace to make them ready for it.

This is the central crime against Freedom in modern society. Machines designed to do the work of ten men have produced as their result the necessity of ten men having to work ten times harder than before. And as they will not do this

except in obedience to an idea, they are fobbed off with the idea of nationality, which gives them a sole aim—the making of their country the greatest in the world. This is the ostensible aim of all civilised communities, from tiny Holland to vast America, though it should be obvious to the smallest intelligence that they cannot all be the greatest country in the world. Meanwhile, those who live in these insanely ambitious communities perish, and, rather than abandon their boyish dominant ideas, drag all down with them into destruction, and sacrifice not only their youth but the future of their children.

It is only when the Great War is thought of in its relation to children that its full monstrosity can be seen, or how hideous it is that they should be forced to grow up in an atmosphere so poisoned with lies and hatred, for ultimately it is upon the preservation of grace that the future freedom of humanity depends.

The weary war-ridden mind dwells lovingly upon the idea of children, for in them grace is visible, that charm, that bloom which should be soft and sweet upon all human life, even at its most horrible and most tragic. Wherever dignity is preserved there is grace, and it is the lack of dignity in the European War which reveals it for what it is, the industrial system carried to its logical end.

To that end are future generations going to drive the children now being born, or will they make it their first aim so to preserve dignity, mind, and

grace that the system will be amended so that it can be used to liberate men and no longer to enslave them? This can be done, and will be done through education, and through that alone, only it must aim not at the sham dignity of the world of States, but at the true dignity of grace which lived far more in men and women before a dishonest and corrupt system of education was made general, and used to implant in the minds of children the germs of a political religion which, being entirely out of date and hopelessly unrelated to the facts of life, must bring about their destruction and make it impossible for them to enjoy a good and fruitful social life.

No generation has the right to attempt to bind its successor down to its quarrels or its superstitions, for in any generation there may be revolutionary discoveries which can change the character of life's responsibilities. Nothing endures but change, and to meet change freedom is necessary. The arbitrary alteration of the machinery of society by powerful men produces dislocation and destruction, but in a real democracy, a true commonwealth, there would be a suppleness and elasticity which would withstand and assimilate the profoundest change. Already the economic machinery of society has proved to be marvellously elastic, but the political and educational machinery has been so rigid as, when the time for changes came, to force disaster. Until the political and education machinery of society is developed,

men and women will remain the slaves of their economic machinery, for that is all they have to rely on. It will drive them again and again to madness, until at last they are forced to realise that economic machinery is for economic purposes alone, and that it is useless to look to it for satisfaction of the deeper purposes of life.

Then they will be compelled to realise the paramount importance of grace, the mysterious virtue which lives in children and in works of art, and they will demand the fulfilment of the dreams of poets, who have ever been concerned to preserve through life that quiet knowledge of truth and beauty which in children they could express in play, and as men they seek to put forth in enduring form.

The beauty and the joy of children are contained within themselves, but in the lives of men and women, lovers and workers, as they must be, beauty and joy must enter also into the life of the mind, filling it so utterly that they must break its circumference and flow out into the beauty and joy of the universe, which is the intimation of that which we call God. The grace in children is from God, and seeks its way through life and in life in all its moments—each to its divine origin. If it be denied them, moral death is the wages of that sin; but if it be perceived, then life and the knowledge of immortality are the natural reward.

Individually thousands of men and women do to the extent of their capacity enjoy this percep-



tion, but socially it has never yet been recognised except indirectly in the honour paid to successful artists, not because they were artists but because they were successful. In children there has never yet been social recognition of grace, because the treatment of children has been dominated by the idea of punishment, the instrument of patriarchal authority.

Punishment is a blasphemous idea, an impertinent outrage upon the moral law that shines through all nature. It has been used by society as a means of imposing moral death against those whose vitality and impulse reject it as a means of scrambling through life. Punishment aggravates and does not deter wickedness. It imposes a forced isolation in which evil is bred, because the resentful will always find some means of breaking isolation down. And among children, whose instinctive loyalty to grace makes them naturally democratic, punishment is an abomination. The harm a child can do is so little; the harm that can be done to it is so immense and so far-reaching in its consequences that punishment is an unwarrantable interference. Thoughts, words, and deeds bring their own consequences—good if they be good, ill if they be evil. The idea of punishment interrupts the process and arrests the creation of thoughts, words, and deeds by an artificially propagated fear.

Punishment makes children afraid of their own thoughts and their own emotions, and so deprives



them of the natural necessity of learning how to select and control them. Under a *régime* of punishment children learn to be frightened of their own spontaneity and to detest and suspect it in others, and as an offset all they gain is an automatic loyalty to rules, which as time goes on are carried further and further away from true morality.

Schools, instead of being the right corrective to the necessary discipline of the home, places in which children can learn naturally and by degrees to put off childish things, impose a mechanical discipline upon the natural discipline of parental authority, and so send children out into the world deflowered, apt food for the mechanical system in which they will be exhausted by the time they are middle-aged for sheer lack of spiritual sustenance and room in which their souls can expand.

The Western races have been accustomed to laugh at the Chinese habit of cramping women's feet, but our ancient custom is to cramp children's minds, especially the minds of girls. We do it presumably because we admire mindless beauty and, like the Chinese, the submissive domesticity of women, and cripple them in order to make it easier for them to submit. But as the Chinese have discarded their ancient custom so ours is being rejected, because the economic machinery of the world demands the labour of women. This they can supply to their own gain, but they should make it a condition that the economic machinery does not demand the labour of children.

When that demand is made, then is the time to insist upon the development of political and educational machinery to bring them up to the level of efficiency of the economic.

Children, at least, may be trusted with the maximum of liberty, for, even if they turn it into licence, the harm they can do is small, and they would then have some chance of becoming acquainted with the disabilities that attend upon the abuse of liberty. Schools should provide training in the use of liberty, should give children room to grow and to shake out of themselves the bubbles of adolescence, which, if they cannot escape, turn to a malignant poison in the system and hasten that moral death which is the hidden scourge of humanity.

On the other hand, if children are not trained in the use of liberty, but only in automatic loyalty to rules, then it becomes difficult to allow them liberty when they are grown men and women. The danger of their abusing it has been enhanced tenfold by their training, which renders them unfit for the great life that opens before them when passion enters into their instincts and kindles them for action and creation.

The minds of children are fed as though they were as robust as their bellies, but the mind is entirely different from the belly in its functions. If it is repelled for too long or too continuously, it withdraws from spontaneous activity, becomes automatic, and responds only to familiar stimuli,

and is only irritated by novel impressions which, if it were healthy, would stir it into an adventurous curiosity. A mind so numbed cannot be free, cannot have any desire for truth, and becomes, instead of a living nexus between the individual and society and the external world, a thick barrier past which no idea can proceed either in or out. For this reason the great mass of men and women live dully from day to day, with no ideas save those implanted in their minds as children, sustained only by their own animal warmth and the partial satisfaction demanded by the craving of their dulled instincts. They can then always be gulled by an appeal to their childish ideas, which are all they have, and roused by a stirring call to the prejudices which pass for morality with them. Their social habit consists in the condemnation of the doings of others and the condonation of their own.

So sunk in lethargy are the great mass of men, so indifferent whether the machinery of society—the economic machinery, that is, for there is no other—sweeps them into dull factories or muddy trenches—that the imaginative mind might well despair of them—would, indeed, but for their pathetic, adorable simplicity. There they are, imperturbable and indomitable, as solid and as satisfying as the earth itself.

The simplicity of the industrial populations of the world has lost the grace of the simplicity of peasants. It is the task of education to restore it.

The peasant is educated by his knowledge of the earth, by familiarity with the ways of beasts and plants, with the sweetening dews and the cleansing rains, the purging frosts and the clarifying thunder. The town-dweller must be educated in the ways of men and in the movements of the world of the mind, which are no less mysterious and lovely than those of the external world. Natural beauty must be perceived again through intellectual and moral beauty. It is as impossible to return to the grace of the peasant as to that of the savage, but always new stores of grace are being brought into the world by children, and this must be fostered, nourished, and cherished, so that it cannot be put away with other childish things, as egoism, selfish fantasy, indifference, and unthinking cruelty.

Here is to be found the link between the internationalism of humanity and the internationalism of the intellect. Poets, painters, musicians, and philosophers have through the ages created and released more than enough intellectual and moral beauty to provide a clear aim for education; but this aim can never be attained so long as education is twisted to serve purely national ends or is perverted to supply docile slaves for the economic machinery of society, machine-fodder, cannon-fodder, terms which include both rich and poor, exploiter and exploited, profiteers and their victims, for there is no essential difference between them. All who are within the system are enslaved

and forced to live without grace and without dignity. A few, in spite of the system, gain intellectual freedom and wither like cut flowers. A few gain spiritual freedom, and live in an agony of artistic creation or efforts towards reform. But none gains social freedom, which is impossible when the vast majority are slaves, while the worst slaves of all are those who have sacrificed all for power, only to find themselves impotent against the terrible inertia of the mass.

Freedom dwells in the impulse towards beauty. It is this impulse stirring in the blood which brings grace and dignity to body and mind, a supple comeliness to the limbs, a keenness to the nerves. Those human beings in whom this impulse stirs are masters of themselves and cannot be enslaved. To produce such human beings is the object of education, and if it is impossible to make a silk purse out of a sow's ear, those who cannot achieve this condition must be left at liberty to be slaves if they so wish it. If there is to be liberty there must be tolerance.

A free man will neither exploit himself nor suffer himself to be exploited. He will not suffer himself to be used for purposes which he knows to be base.

It will be a fine stroke of irony if there are large numbers of free women before there are many free men. Yet this seems probable, as women have suffered more acutely and more fundamentally from industrial slavery than men, and they will be



more concerned than men over the constant murder of the grace in children. A generation of cruel "education" has produced results so horrible, has so revoltingly defiled the sources of human freedom, that the position of women has become desperate. . . . Is it for this that they have laid their treasures before men, that they have sunk into their months of child-bearing, and gone down into the valley of the shadow to bring forth new life? To see their sons and daughters deflowered before ever they have crossed the threshold of life? To have them clipped and cramped for a mechanical labour more deadly even than was the brutal labour of the fields?

Out of the past come ancestral voices giving utterance to the ancient and undying song of liberty, and this wakes an echo in the hearts of women, from whom it passes to the hearts of men, and a great cry goes up from the old to the new nations of the earth: "We have struggled and toiled to master our fate; we have moved out over the whole world, but here in our own homes the evil of the past is too strong for us and we perish for lack of liberty. We have created a void about ourselves which is sapping our energy, sucking the life out of all our hopes and our dreams." But the new nations are dependent upon the old. For mind and spiritual tradition they have to return to the parent civilisation. The Europeans must then find liberty or perish. Yet because of their immense responsibility to the whole of humanity



they cannot surrender, but, faithful to the glorious traditions of the past, to the Europe created by Shakespeare, Dante, Cervantes, Goethe, Tolstoy, and their brothers of genius, they will turn to the young generations and say: "We have made this machinery. It has enslaved us. Take it; use it to win your freedom."

The women have been the first to make this clear appeal to the future, to accept their slavery as the necessary sacrifice for the freedom of the future, and to discard it when it began to impinge through education upon the future's choice of action and upon its young stirring impulse. The answer of the old men, clinging desperately to the shabby remnants of their traditions, has been war. In that they perish, they and their slavery. When they are gone Freedom will begin to shine again in the world, the grace of children shall shine again, blessing the name of lovers. Authority will come again and for all as they live in freedom there shall be but one commandment: "Thou shalt serve the Lord thy God with all thy might and with all thy soul." This will be the end of all false service, and men and women will once more live passionately, adventurously, and fully as they have ever done in the great ages of the history of humanity, when the beacon fires of liberty have flared from the hills to tell the coming and the victory of love.

## CHAPTER IX: OF THE IDEAL

**T**HE old idea that government and liberty are incompatible is no longer valid. The moral sense of humanity repudiates all save government by consent, and in the modern world this moral sense is the source of all authority. It is the living essence of the democratic principle, the aim of which is liberty through government, that is, through agreement and co-operation. Liberty is no longer a reward, no longer a matter of privilege, but a right, to be forfeited only by those who are corrupt and morally injurious to society, and then only as a matter of expediency, not of right. If a man employs his liberty to thwart that of others, then society must use its power of coercion. In the main this is achieved by the deterrent power of public opinion, but it must be admitted that there will always be cases in which physical prevention must be employed, though, as wisdom permeates society, such cases will become fewer, and offenders will be left to face the natural consequences of their actions.

When government was regarded as being inspired by some awful authority from above, then liberty could not be suffered to exist except by dispensation and upon the fulfilment of conditions.

The time for that is past. The conception of government has altered. Its authority comes now from the moral sense of the people, that sense by which they are in touch with a power greater than themselves. They do not see their governors as emissaries of a higher power, but as the chosen

representatives of the greater power beyond themselves. Inspiration is now no longer in the head of the body politic, but in the whole organism. That body is now corrupt with the diseases inherited from the abuses of the old order, but in spite of its corruption it is quick with its perception of the possibilities of the new order, and this perception will not be denied. Liberty is a right and all men must have it. He who cheats another man of his liberty loses his own, and so the rich men who have cheated the poor of their liberties have lost theirs. The exploitation brought on by the industrial method has driven liberty out of the political systems of the world. Systems? There is only one system. The plutocratic aristocracy cannot maintain liberty as a privilege: democracy can ensure liberty as a right. Plutocracy can only destroy liberty in exploiters and exploited alike. Therefore plutocracy is doomed. Whatever political systems come and go the ideal of liberty is imperishable and claims ever the best and bravest and most incorruptible in human energy, which moves ever to one end, the establishment of the divine in man in all those places where men do congregate.

The world now points the finger of scorn at Germany as the flagrant destroyer of liberty. There is no nation under the sun where liberty is not every day conspired against. Ceaselessly in every nation those who are called capitalists consolidate their interests and attempt to dissipate those of the

masses upon whose energies they depend. They work unconsciously against but unwillingly for liberty. They tighten and economise the industrial machinery of the world and make more horrible the lot of men, but continually they have to make concessions until at last they will have to cede their power and admit that the machine they have created has grown beyond their capacity and needs more than mere brute energy to drive it, and must have the direction of authority.

Without such direction the machine stultifies the minds of both organisers and labourers, or, as the fashion is now to call them, Capital and Labour. *Prima facie*, it is a question of economic justice, but that is an ideal too easily attainable, in theory, to have any driving force, or even enough to bring it about in practice. If a thing can be proved on paper it is hardly worth troubling about in life, for it is much too simple. If we had economic justice to-morrow we should hardly notice it. We should merely be more acutely conscious of our profound dissatisfactions, as indeed is the case with those who are most clearly convinced of economic injustice.

There are many who imagine that when economic injustice has at last brought hunger, there will be a great driving force. So there will, but only towards destruction, and from that we can only be delivered by perception of the ideal of liberty, without which the age of economic justice will be as barren as the age of exploitation, as dull as a game of cards played without the King, Queen, and Knave: a matter of mere numbers.

Now to the ordinary simple human instincts numbers are repulsive. Reduce humanity to numbers and it is no longer humanity. Men must have in their affairs the colour of their passions, a certain fundamental animal warmth. They had this in their politics when public affairs were in the hands of Kings and Queens and Princes, brilliant beings who used public affairs to glorify their personalities. But when public affairs are used by dull men in offices to swell the figures in their ledgers then the colour goes and politics become a blur in which it is hard for the average man to be interested. The tyranny of numbers thwarts his liberty, but there is no colour anywhere to stimulate his passion, and no warmth anywhere save such as he can get in his own house, which all too soon becomes a sepulchre.

There must be colour in the social life to turn the hunger for liberty into a fruitful passion. Without it hunger may turn into a passion of resentment, a sterile passion such as animated Cromwell and the Puritans in the first revolt against mediæval tyranny. They sponged out the colour of society and with that colour went liberty, or, at least the power to attain it, the power naturally to enjoy it and instinctively to exercise it, and still to this day men prefer the garish colours of militarism, the specious vulgarities hung out by the exploiters, to the drab reality of numbers, even though the numbers should bring economic justice.

What colours are there clearer than the rain-



bow? And is there not ever recurrent a rainbow formed by the light of liberty falling athwart the mists and the drenching rain of human misery? Liberty is the sun in the inward firmament of humanity, and towards liberty the souls of men are drawn as the planets are drawn to the great sun in the heavens.

I know not if planets are baffled and bemused as men are or if they have a perfection of motion that for men is yet far to seek. Yet this I know, that men can never stay in their seeking, even in dire calamity, even in filth and squalor.

In old societies colour bound and lured them to a passion. In the new society of our present dreams they must find colour again, for without colour they remain indifferent to form and structures, slack and indifferent to their creative impulses; their life becomes a sprawl in which they are lachrymose and bored, dull and mechanical, with the blithe note gone even from their laughter, which is in a human being what song is in a bird, the distinct and exquisite quality of the creature. A man laughs most sweetly and most musically when all his tears are shed and the tragedy of his existence has baffled all his powers of expression, and I think that after these generations of suppression the race must be near that now, and it may be that laughter will bring the release that stern brooding thought has failed to find.

The magic that coloured the mediæval world is broken. The money that men thought was magic



has brought only bondage and dull days, and work has been degraded into drudgery for which no man can hold any respect.

Now if a man has no respect for his work he can have none for anything else, neither for himself, nor for his neighbour, nor for anything but the power which can declare whether or no he shall starve. The modern man has a kind of awful respect for the industrial system, but none for the men who pretend to have mastered it and so grip him by the entrails, but make no attempt to hold him by his mind or his spirit. And yet how full of fleeting colour is the modern world, how marvellous in its prodigality is the human scene! The immense treasures of every plane of life are poured forth and wasted. For lack of love to have and to share they are used to destroy and to block out liberty. Light we our cities never so gaily, yet we are doomed to dwell in inward darkness because we have no ideal to light up the colours of the amazing world we have created. As slaves we have made it: as free men, serving liberty, we should enjoy it, letting all who can be Kings and Queens, while the rest are happy numbers.

Is not this aristocracy? Is not this a grading of men? As I see it, it is democracy, based not on a dead theoretic equality of men, but of a spiritual equality. I count a good cowman the equal of a good poet. All men do not desire the same degree of liberty, and he who desires to be a king requires more than he whose aim is to be a philosopher. It

is for this reason that the State cannot dispense liberty. Let him who will be king, but let him answer for his kingship to the moral sense of the people. To that all men must bend—kings, philosophers, cowmen—finding then in life a measure of equality as inexorable as that which they find in the grave.

In this equality all men are endowed with the authority which emanates through the people, and by this authority have the right to choose what men shall speak for them and frame the rules by which their society is governed. Thus a society will not be governed from the head, but, like the body, by all its nerves controlled by that mysterious thing called mind.

No man can define mind. It is not seated in the head. The heart also has its reasons. The solar plexus has its say in the affairs of mind, and the nerve of a tooth may profoundly modify an idea. So also in a society the government at any one period is not its mind. It may be compared to the brain, though fortunately it can be changed—as, unhappily, the brain of a man cannot be—and the Government which in the name of the State claims absolute power, even to life and death, is a monstrous usurper. It is the brain claiming to do the work of the mind, and, by so doing, wickedly refusing to serve liberty.

It is the whole aim of government to safeguard the right to liberty. Every function of government exercised without reference to that makes for

anarchy, tyranny, and poverty of life, spiritual and material. It is only to government that men aimed at liberty can whole-heartedly consent, and the absolute guarantee of that right is the ideal towards which all political movements tend, and in proportion as they fail do they become tyrannous and injurious. And in proportion as they fail they resort to militarism to protect themselves against the enemies they create abroad and the suffering and discontent they breed at home. Again, in proportion as they fail they are driven to clutch at the ideas of Empire and domination under the pretence that they can force freedom upon inferior races. And it has always been the case that merchants and traders are ready to take advantage of political failure.

In that immense political failure which is called the Great War liberty has disappeared and the merchants are clamorous. If they can keep their control of raw materials, then liberty can go hang. This is the case in all those huge trading concerns, the modern States; but in the nature of things it cannot last long. Men have more than hands and pockets. Licence cannot satisfy their needs. They must move and grow towards liberty. They must have stirring in their communities an ideal.

Ariel is free, and Caliban must aspire to the condition of Ariel. He cannot toil and labour in the service of his own grossness, but he must work nobly and with eagerness in the service of his own spirit. In such work and in such service shall liberty be found.

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